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The Duenna of a Genius.

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'A DAUGHTER OF THE SOIL,' &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

PASTORALE.

THE spring was far advanced when the Kostolitzes found themselves established at Wiesbaden. Following the doctor's advice, they took rooms at the higher end of the town, near the beautiful wooded heights of the Neroberg, then in its full glory of delicate green leafage. Their rooms were pretty and quaint, on the ground floor of one of the pensions so numerous in that locality; the sitting-room in particular, though very tiny, had great charms for the sisters, for it possessed a bow-window looking out on the Nerothal and up towards the woods; and in this bow-window was just space enough for a small table and two chairs. There they took their coffee and rolls in the mornings, giving largesse afterwards to the multitudes of birds, which, tame and expectant from long indulgence, fluttered perpetually round the window-sills. Never, surely, was such a place for birds as Wiesbaden. Everybody feeds them; after each meal one sees the ledges of all the windows white with crumbs; they flutter almost under one's feet in the streets, barely taking the trouble to hop out of the way when a cart or carriage passes by.

In the Kostolitzer's sitting-room there was also space for a piano, and what more, as Valérie asked, could anyone want? The change

and excitement of the journey had to a certain extent diverted her mind and raised her spirits ; sometimes she laughed and chattered almost like her old self. Margot carried out the doctor's injunctions in the whole-hearted way which was characteristic of her : she pursued Valérie with tumblers of milk, and stood over her with a threatening and determined face until she drank them ; she drove her out of doors ; once she even went so far as to lock up the Cremona, whereupon Valérie sat down on the floor and declared that she would not eat, drink, sleep, or go out until her treasure was restored to her. Margot was in consequence forced to give in, but noted with satisfaction that though her sister played constantly, and played, moreover, for the most part Waldenek's music, she was more calm over it than heretofore ; she did not play at unseasonable times, nor throw quite so much passion into the performance. Margot hoped that she was beginning to forget, but Valérie was far from forgetting. When she wandered along the green alleys of the Nerothal, or when in the warmer weather she lay outstretched on the sunlit, mossy sod, inhaling the spicy odour of the larches, and gazing upwards through their feathery, ethereal green at the blue overhead, or when she sat in the Kursaal garden listening to the orchestra, one face was ever before her, one thought absorbed heart and mind. Through the really charming music, which she was ostensibly enjoying, she heard the sounds of other music ; she listened to the strains which seemed to call her soul.

Nevertheless, fresh air, sunshine, change of scene, and the beautiful creamy milk were doing their work ; little Valérie was regaining her rounded contours, her small hands were growing plump again, the colour was coming back to her face ; in spite of her dreams and longings it became evident, even to Margot's anxious eyes, that Valérie was not going to die of love.

Meanwhile, Margot had, as usual, found work to do ; she had managed to pick up a few pupils, and was busy and, in a manner, happy. She, too, was enjoying the rest and the complete change ; the relief, moreover, at finding that her sister's ill-health was but transitory was in itself so great as to be almost joy. She dreamed no dreams, even when she had time to sit with Valérie in the greenwood ; no dreams, at least that were deserving of the name ; for surely if one dream, one must also hope, and no hope entered into these reveries. They chiefly were concerned with the past ; she lived over again certain brief, sweet moments, but found that when thus rehearsed there was a poignant sadness even in the

sweetness that made her sometimes wish she could banish them beyond recall. Sometimes, too, on very bright, golden days, when the birds were singing and the woodland flowers were at their sweetest, she would begin to wonder what it would be like to see and feel such things in the company of *Somebody*. Other girls were allowed to know what such happiness might be ; they were free to own their love, and to accept that which was offered to them. It was curious to think that such happiness was possible in life. Margot had always found life so hard, so stern. Anything which had appeared to her pleasant, she had known from the outset to be forbidden to her ; that for which she longed might be given to others but never to her. The cares of life were hers in abundance—toil, anxiety ; but of life's sweets, what did she know ? Only that they were sweet, and that she must never hope to taste them. Some day John Croft would find a woman whom he would love as he had loved her—more than he had loved her. His fancy for her had been a transitory thing ; already, as his silence proved, he had forgotten her. And this woman—this happy woman—would be free to tell him that his love was returned ; and they would marry and be always together. They would wander together, perhaps, in woods like these, and every beautiful thing would seem more beautiful because of the sympathy between them ; he would look at her as he used to look at Margot, only more tenderly, because she, the wife, might venture to look at him in return and let the love in her heart show itself in her eyes ; he would say to her some of those sweet things which Margot had so often seen trembling on his lips and had not suffered him to speak. His wife could, without fear or hesitation, respond—avow. Here a sob would rise in Margot's throat, and she would sometimes turn over on the mossy sward, pillowng her face on her folded arms, so that Valérie thought she was asleep, and did not guess that her tears were dripping into the warm, kind earth, in whose broad bosom alone, as she told herself sadly, would her unquiet heart find rest.

When August came an event occurred which upset the peaceful tenor of the sisters' lives : Waldeneck suddenly appeared at Wiesbaden. One morning when they were indulging, as they occasionally did, in a tour of inspection of the fascinating shops in the Wilhelmstrasse, Margot suddenly felt Valérie clutch her arm.

'Look there !' she cried in a choked voice.

A large placard had caught her eye, which announced that the

celebrated pianist, Waldenek, was passing through Wiesbaden on his way to Frankfort and Vienna, and had been persuaded to give one concert at the Kursaal on the following Wednesday.

How Margot conveyed Valérie home she could not afterwards imagine ; and to get through the days which intervened till the evening of the concert arrived was still more difficult. It is needless to say that Valérie insisted on going to the concert, and on engaging the best places attainable. This was one of the occasions on which her sister knew it would be useless to attempt opposition. The evening came, and they walked together in the warm, scented twilight to the Kursaal, which somewhat prosaic structure assumed a certain fairylike appearance as thus seen, its twinkling lights flashing out from beneath the shadowy branches of the surrounding trees. As they passed through the gardens the dreamy plash of the fountains fell musically upon their ears, and a thrush piped overhead.

‘ Margot, this is Fairyland ! ’ said Valérie. ‘ Let us make haste, the Prince is waiting ! ’

If the exterior of the Kursaal had at that hour a certain poetry of aspect, the interior was assuredly commonplace enough. The concert-room was crammed to overflowing with a typical German audience—businesslike, critical, and music-loving, each and all, from the sturdy old gentleman who, while waiting for the pianist to make his appearance, discoursed eloquently of lager beer, to the pretty girl whose blue eyes roved so frequently to the doorway, where an array of gallant Uhlans had taken up their position.

When Waldenek made his appearance, Margot scarcely dared to glance at her sister ; and throughout the performance, though Waldenek surpassed himself, and under any other circumstances her artistic delight would have been unbounded, her anxiety marred her enjoyment. The applause at the end, if less enthusiastic than the ovation which Waldenek had received in London, nevertheless appeared to satisfy him ; doubtless the artist knew the temper of those he had to deal with, and felt the sincerity of their approval. On being recalled for the last time he smiled as he bowed his acknowledgments.

‘ Margot, he smiles ! ’ murmured Valérie in her sister’s ear. ‘ Oh, Margot, he smiles ! Oh, if he would smile for me ! ’

‘ Come away, child ; come away,’ cried Margot, hastily buttoning her sister’s wrap, and then imperatively forcing her to her feet and drawing her towards the door. There was luckily a general move at the same time, and the sisters were carried onward

and out into the sweet night air. When at length they had escaped from the press Valérie broke from her sister, and hurried on a few paces to a bench under the trees, upon which she threw herself.

'Do not let us go in yet,' she cried. 'Oh, Margot, look at the stars in that deep blue sky. Can you not smell the flowers? Oh, Margot, what a world! Oh, that music! I think I am going mad. It is delightful to go mad like this. Heavens! what a night! Margot, Margot, I am happy: I have heard his music—I have seen him smile! Perhaps if we stay here he may pass by.'

Margot thereupon wisely resolved not to stay there a moment longer, and swiftly drawing the trembling arm through hers, with much difficulty persuaded Valérie to go home. Valérie continued in the same condition of violent excitement for some hours, but at last was induced to go to bed, falling, after many feverish twists and turns, into a troubled sleep.

She woke early and looked cautiously at Margot, whose anxiety had kept her long awake, but who was now in a deep slumber. Valérie rose and dressed, noiselessly stealing into the adjoining room, and softly closing the door of communication. The window at the further end was unshuttered, and a flood of sunlight was pouring into the room. It was still so early that no one in the house was astir, indeed the whole town—as much of it, at least, as Valérie could see—was wrapped in slumber. The birds were twittering, it is true, in the boughs beside her window, beginning to wake up to the business of the day, but their drowsy chirps and flutterings served but to accentuate the prevailing stillness.

The external quiet of nature roused a kind of frenzied impatience in Valérie. She was not quiet; the blood was leaping in her veins; she felt a passionate need of movement, of action; she wanted above all to play, to give expression to this strange tumult, this wholly unreasonable joy, which since last night had taken possession of her. How could this stupid, lazy world sleep on this beautiful summer's morning, when the mere fact of living was intoxicating? How should she have patience to wait till the dull town woke up to its daily hum-drum cares? Margot had warned her that she would give scandal and offence if she played, as she was wont to play at home, at any time the fancy took her; the other lodgers would be annoyed, she insisted, if Valérie performed a fantasia after midnight, for instance, or in the very early

morning. Valérie sat down on the window-sill, drumming, with unquiet, impatient fingers, on the panes. Was it not so the Rêverie went? She could remember it note by note, his Rêverie, the voice of his heart. All night little strands of that music had run in and out of her fitful dreams, weaving themselves therein like golden threads. It was the voice of his heart calling to hers. . . . Her fingers dropped suddenly into her lap, and she leaned out of the window, holding her breath. Hark! What was that? In the distance, echoing through the silent street, she heard a footstep—a man's footstep—measured and firm.

As she listened the colour swept over her face; her heart began to throb so violently that it almost drowned the sounds for which she was straining her ears. In that hushed, expectant moment it seemed to her that the world was waiting; she, too, was waiting, and as the step came nearer and nearer, she felt that it would not be in vain. By what coincidence it came to pass I know not—whether some odd ‘brain wave’ or intuition warned her of Waldenek’s approach—certain it is that it was he himself who presently came into sight, walking along dreamily, evidently rejoicing in the absolute freedom and security of the early morning. He carried his hat in his hand, and his fine head was a little thrown back, the morning breeze lifting the silky, silvery hair from his temples.

Valérie sat absolutely still while he passed, watching his figure until it disappeared under the trees of the boulevard leading to the Neroberg. Then she sprang to her feet, a sudden mad purpose taking possession of her. She would follow Waldenek to the woods, and there, alone with him in that green, silent world, she would play for him.

She quickly drew her violin from its case, and without heed ing the fact that she was bare-headed, stole swiftly and noiselessly from the room, unbarred the front door, and let herself out of the house. Flitting across the street, she soon found herself on Waldenek’s track. There was his figure, a little way ahead. Valérie slackened her pace, keeping him well in sight, but not allowing herself to gain upon him. Now he was beginning to mount the incline which led to the heart of the woods. Valérie followed, walking very lightly, and lifting her skirts lest a rustle might betray her. She could hear his steady, even steps fall rhythmically on the little path, and now and then a dry stick snap beneath his foot; but louder than all in Valérie’s ears sounded the beating of her heart. It seemed to her as though he, too

must hear it. Once or twice she paused, pressing her hands against her bosom in the futile effort to still the throbbing within. A blackbird flew across the path occasionally with a startled chuckle, and a finch, flitting from one bough to another, uttered its piercing call; squirrels scrambled up and down the fir-trees, with little scratchings and patterings; but the prevailing impression of the woods at this hour was of a vast and overwhelming silence. Waldenek's quiet footfalls seemed to harmonise with this stillness, to accentuate without disturbing it, as the reverent footsteps of a worshipper break not the solemn silence of a church; but Valérie's little hurrying feet, her quick breathing, and eager, loud-beating heart, were in a manner out of place in this woodland sanctuary.

After what seemed a very long time Waldenek paused. The winding path had led him high up the hillside, and he had reached a point where a clearing had been made among the trees, so that a beautiful view was obtainable. A rustic bench, raised on a moss-grown plateau, had been thoughtfully provided for all who might wish to enjoy this prospect; and after a moment or two he climbed the platform and seated himself, suffering his eyes to wander from the undulating depths, clothed with every varying shade of green, which lay immediately beneath him, to the wooded heights opposite, the green slope further still, where the white stones of the cemetery glistened in the morning light, and beyond to where, in the far distance, mountain ranges, blue and purple, lost themselves in the blue of the sky.

When Waldenek had paused Valérie had also halted. Now she stood still, mustering up courage to intrude upon his notice. A small path branched off from that which she had followed, winding up the hillside above the spot where Waldenek sat, and passing through a clump of fir-trees a stone's throw from his bench. Valérie, gathering her draperies together, crept noiselessly up this path, breathing more freely when she found herself under the shadow of the firs; then, after a trembling pause, she began to play.

Surely no more strange adventure ever befell any man than that which thus overtook Waldenek. It was not every man, to begin with, who in spite of the fatigues of the preceding evening would have wandered to the woods at this early hour; but artists are renowned for doing unlooked-for things, and acting on the impulse of the moment. Waldenek had been tempted out by the beauty of the morning, and now sat drinking in this beauty, with

the full appreciation of a nature tuned to all beautiful things. The prospect before his eyes was full of charm and variety; the warm, spicy, aromatic air was in itself a delight; his thoughts were full of music, and, of a sudden, music fell upon his ear—his own music, his *Rêverie*, played with wonderful tenderness and expression on the violin. His first and predominant sensation was that of surprise—surprise, not at the unusualness of hearing music in such a place and at such an hour, but that his *Rêverie*, written for the piano, should adapt itself so exquisitely to the violin. He listened spellbound, the beauty of the theme—his theme, conceived by his own brain, his own heart—intoxicating him as it had not done even in the first ecstasy of composition. He was carried away by his own passion, uplifted by his own desire. Tears stood in his eyes, and yet he smiled. Then all at once it was borne in upon him that the unseen musician was an artist, more than an artist, a genius. Only a genius could give evidence of such sympathy, such intuition, such extraordinary power. Why, he divined that which had eluded Waldenek himself; he brought to light secrets of which the Master had lost the key. This instrument of his could convey emotions of which he had indeed been conscious, but to which he had been unable to give adequate expression.

The last note died away, and Waldenek, springing to his feet, hastened towards the spot from which they had come.

From beneath the shadow of the firs a figure glided forth to meet him. The music had lifted Valérie, too, completely out of herself, sweeping away all hesitation, all fear, the last vestige of self-consciousness. She stood fully revealed now, her little transfigured face upraised, her white dress bathed in sunlight, her ruffled brown hair turning to gold in the morning rays. Waldenek paused, astonished, transfixed. What was this vision? A child, a sprite, the Spirit of the Woods? Then he took a step nearer and looked into her luminous, inspired eyes. Heavens! No—it was a woman!

'Who are you?' he cried, in tones which vibrated with emotion. 'What are you? How do you come here?'

'I followed you,' said Valérie; then, without waiting for further speech, she began to play again, a *Prière* of Waldenek's, which had won for him thunderous applause in London, but which had not been included in the programme of the preceding night.

Waldenek felt as it were bewitched. A less impressionable

man would have succumbed to the glamour of the scene and of the hour, the magic of the strange, beautiful little personality, the romance, the unusualness of this meeting ; and when the peculiar susceptibilities, the somewhat insecure balance, the impulses and enthusiasms of a highly-wrought artistic nature are taken into consideration, it is not surprising that as Waldenek listened he gradually lost control over himself. It was his own music to which he was listening, his own thought, his creation ; and yet mingled with it was something else. Through the sadness of his theme he could hear an underlying note of deeper pathos ; added to his pleading there was a yet more moving, more desperate appeal. While she played it seemed to him that his own soul and hers were beseeching Heaven—for what ?

At length Valérie, pausing, let the hand which held the bow drop by her side and looked straight into the Master's face, while over her own flashed one of her exquisite smiles.

' You can make your heart speak,' she said, ' but I can make it sing.'

Margot did not wake until her usual hour, when she sprang up, terrified to find that Valérie was not by her side. All her researches and anxious inquiries brought no satisfactory answer : no one had seen Valérie, no one could imagine whither she had gone. Margot put on her hat, and prepared to pursue her search in the town, intending to inquire, with due precaution, Waldenek's address, for she guessed that the disappearance of her wayward charge was connected with him ; but just as she crossed the Nerothal she descried Valérie herself, tripping jubilantly to meet her. A few paces behind her, walking as though in a dream, was the great musician.

' Valérie ! ' cried Margot, stopping short, and clinging to the back rail of a friendly bench ; the sudden revulsion of feeling caused her to turn white and faint.

But Valérie was too much intoxicated to heed.

' We have met,' she cried, ' and we have spoken together for a long time in the woods, and we know each other quite well. Oh, Margot ! quel bonheur ! quel délice ! '

Casting a glance full of anguish and inquiry into Waldenek's face, Margot saw there, too, evidence of happiness so bewildering that it might be called delirium. She drew Valérie towards her quickly with a little frightened maternal gesture. She was on the alert, ready to fight in the defence of her treasure.

Waldenek glanced at her, and a kindly smile chased away his former rapt expression. He held out his hand.

'So this is Grandfather Margot,' he said.

He knew all, then—the details of their home-life, their little secret follies and tendernesses. This stranger, whom a few hours ago it had seemed hopeless even to aspire to meet, to what intimacy had he not been admitted during that morning in the wood? What had not Valérie told him? On what terms of friendship—or more than friendship—did they not now stand?

'He is coming in,' cried Valérie; 'he is going to play with me. Margot, Margot, think of that! He and I will play together—we will play his music. He thinks with me that my art completes his.'

She spoke quite freely and fearlessly, and Waldenek, listening, betrayed no surprise. He seemed rather to acquiesce. Valérie led the way into the house, and Margot, giddy and trembling with a complexity of emotions, followed without attempting to remonstrate. Indeed, any remonstrance would have been absolutely vain—Valérie had escaped from her hands.

Looking back afterwards on the hours that ensued, Margot could never quite realise what happened. Her mind was in a whirl. Waldenek was leaving by the mid-day train, and so the most must needs be made of the time that intervened. Breakfast was on the table, but did anybody touch it? Margot had afterwards a dim recollection of having endeavoured to persuade Valérie to drink some coffee; she saw Waldenek cross the room with an empty cup in his hand—had there ever been anything in it? She remembered breaking some bread and putting a morsel in her mouth, but it was so difficult to swallow that she had not repeated the experiment.

For the rest, there had been music, music, music! Valérie had played as she had never played before; Waldenek had played with her—they had been lost to all sense of their surroundings; even Margot, leaning back in her corner, had become almost as excited as they. While she was still breathlessly marvelling and admiring, in spite of the sick pain at her heart, Waldenek had suddenly risen, declaring that it was time for him to go. He had clasped Valérie's hands—both hands—in his, and looked into her eyes, saying:

'We shall meet in London.'

And Valérie had cried tremulously:

'Au revoir!'

When he was gone, she had thrown herself into Margot's arms, calling :

' Is it a dream ? Is it a dream ? '

Margot, many a time, in thinking over that strange morning's work, felt as if it had been indeed a dream.

CHAPTER XVII.

SEMPRE CRESCENDO.

EVEN when the first tremulous excitement and wonder had subsided, Margot found it difficult to gather from Valérie what had transpired during her momentous interview with Waldenek upon the Neroberg.

' What did we talk about ? ' Valérie cried impatiently. ' How can I tell ? I do not think we talked at all. I played—we talked of music,' she added inconsequently.

' How was it then he first addressed me as Grandfather Margot ? It seems to me that to know this little familiar name he must also know something of our circumstances.'

' He asked me,' said Valérie dreamily, ' if I were wandering about the world alone—if I had no parents, no one to take care of me ; and I told him I had no parents, but a little sister who was father and mother in one ; who was indeed so wise, though she was so young, that I called her my Patriarch, my Bon Papa.'

Margot was silent for a moment, feeling again that odd pang of jealousy.

' Did you tell him nothing else ? ' she asked presently.

' I told him I was a failure,' said Valérie, with a childish droop of the lip. ' He said I was a genius—ah, I assure you he thought a great deal of my playing—so I thought it as well he should know. And he told me that once, long ago, he had been so poor, so poor, that he had not anything to eat, and he walked a long way, and his shoes were so old and so worn that they dropped from his feet. He had walked to some great town—Vienna I think—and was standing gazing at a *Pianofabrik*, when a lady chanced to pass by, and asked him why he was looking in so eagerly. " Because I want to play," said he. So she took him by the hand—this poor, ragged, barefooted boy—and led him in, and made the master of the Fabrik consent to let him try one of the pianos. After he touched the notes he forgot where he was, and

played, and played, and was supremely happy. And all at once, raising his eyes, he found that the place was crowded; people were pressing round on all sides, and some were weeping. He told me with a smile that it was at that moment his success began—he made friends there who helped him until he was strong enough to stand alone.'

'You see you must after all have talked a good deal,' said Margot, much relieved that the conversation should have been so rational. 'Did he tell you anything more? It was very interesting, that.'

'Let me see, did he tell me anything more? No, I think not. He kept saying, "Play, play"—and I played, and we understood each other through the music better than if we had talked for hours.'

Valérie was lying back in a low chair, her hands clasped beneath her head, and her eyes gazing upwards; presently she continued in a reflective tone, 'Yes, I think he must know that I love him.'

'Valérie,' cried Margot, turning quite pale, and crossing the room to her sister's side, 'I wish you would not say such things even in jest.'

'It is not jest—it is the truth; a most blessed and blissful truth. I love him, and he knows that I do—at least I hope he does. I should be glad for him to know. What greater tribute can one give a great man than the homage of one's love?'

She spoke quite calmly, still leaning back in her chair, gazing pensively at the ceiling, and swinging one little foot backwards and forwards.

'I know you are scandalised,' she continued presently. 'I cannot help it. Surely you know, Margot, that a feeling like this cannot be trammelled by the ordinary conventional rules. From the first moment I saw Paul Waldenek I knew that I loved him—well, now it is a satisfaction to me to think that he knows it too.'

'And does he also love you?' asked Margot in strangled tones.

'How can you ask? I think he liked my music—but that he should love me! Ah, you are cruel to suggest such a thing. Think, I am but a unit amid thousands of worshippers; till yesterday he had never heard of me. Oh no, in my wildest flights I have never dreamt of his loving me.'

'And yet you have sometimes said,' insisted Margot, almost

bitterly, 'that his music told you he wanted you, that you were made for each other.'

'That was before I had spoken to him,' cried Valérie passionately. 'He is a king among men—and I, what am I? Nothing! Nothing! Let us speak of him no more.'

Margot's anxiety did not diminish, it may be supposed, after this conversation, and yet it was a noticeable fact that Valérie's attitude of mind was on the whole calmer than before her meeting with the great artist. She did not talk of him now; she practised as assiduously as before, but varied her programme, consenting, to Margot's great relief, to play the works of other composers as well as his. She seemed to dream less, and though her sister was conscious that this outward serenity was due to some hidden, ever-bubbling source of bliss, she could not but rejoice at it. Valérie seemed to enjoy the present to the full, and to contemplate the future without the dread and aversion with which she had formerly looked forward to it. She spoke quite calmly of their return to London, of the little house which Margot had feared would now seem more despicable than ever in her eyes, and of taking up anew their former life and pursuits.

One day, however, a chance word divulged the reason of this change.

'Waldenek will be returning to London in the autumn,' she observed.

It was then that Margot's anxious heart began to torment itself in earnest. Waldenek had no doubt been taken by Valérie's beauty and charm, and also struck by her undoubted genius; but was the impression more than transitory? Was it not unlikely that among new scenes and daily recurring triumphs, he would bestow even a passing thought upon his little nymph of the woods? And Valérie—let her say what she might, *she* was hoping and expecting, building castles in the air that, for all their unsubstantial fabric, would cause desperate havoc when overthrown.

Autumn came: the woods of the Neroberg assumed wondrous tints of crimson and gold; the grape-gathering was in full swing on the vine-covered hills which the sisters could see from their windows; all day long troops of peasant-women—looking very picturesque in the distance, carrying themselves, as they did, so erectly, with their baskets poised on their kerchiefed heads, and sadly unlovely and unpoetical at close quarters—climbed up and down between the ranks of green. The grape-clusters, which from afar looked like little black dots irregularly scattered among the

trim rows, were growing fewer and fewer day by day ; the air was full of the honey-sweet odour of the freshly pressed fruit. Looking at Valérie's rounded cheeks, once more gay with their wonted soft bloom, marking the light in her eyes, the elasticity of her step, Margot realised that her harvest, too, was gathered in ; the little sister had found ample store of health and strength and fresh joy of life in this quiet corner of the Fatherland. What were they waiting for ? Why should they not return at once ? Alas ! she knew well that it was not solely on Valérie's account that she dreaded this return. Here, far away from the scene of her customary toils and struggles, she could better put away the thought of her own spoilt and empty life. There was nothing to expect, nothing to hope for ; she could in a manner vegetate in the actual present. But how would it be with her when once more in London, face to face with the old problems, sick at heart with the old fears, and with no one to help and comfort and advise ? The personality of John Croft had been, by her own act, absolutely removed from the sphere of her existence ; he and she would never meet again. So she had decreed ; it was her own work ; and yet that foolish inconsequent heart of hers quailed at the idea of it. Now that she realised that he had taken her mandate literally, and would obey it to the letter, it seemed to her that it would be scarcely possible to face life without him.

However, to such a nature as Margot's the word *impossible* in cases like this—when it is merely self that has to be conquered, inclination that must be overcome—has no real significance. Margot knew very well that she must face her life and take up her old duties, and when the proper time came she made all needful preparations for their departure.

October found them back in Pitt Street, and before a month had passed Margot had regained many of her former pupils and settled down to her routine of work. It would be hard to say which sister looked out more anxiously for the return of Waldenek, though it was with very different feelings that they awaited his coming. A sense of breathless expectation fell upon them both when a paragraph in the papers informed them that a date was actually fixed for a recital by him at no very distant period. Needless to say places were secured at once, and both sisters looked forward, the one with blissful trembling hope, the other with dread, to the day on which they should again see and hear him.

The programme duly appeared and was eagerly studied by the

sisters ; Valérie identifying with rapt delight each item. All at once she caught her breath, gazing with dilated eyes at the last on the list.

' Oh, Margot, look there ! What does that mean ? " *To the Beloved ; Rhapsodie : Waldenek* " ! '

Margot tried to laugh. ' Well,' she said, ' it is evidently one of his own compositions. I am sure it will be very beautiful.'

' To the Beloved ! ' repeated Valérie. ' Margot, Margot, this I cannot bear. The Beloved ! It did not hurt me to think that he would never love me, and I do not care how many love him. I am quite content to be one among them. But that *he* should stoop to love a woman, to single out one of his worshippers in particular, should dedicate his music to her ! What has she done to deserve such happiness ? Why should it be she and not I ? Oh, Margot, I hate her ! '

She clenched her hands and showed her little teeth fiercely. ' I could kill her ! ' she cried.

The days which followed passed slowly and miserably. Valérie scarcely ate or slept, and her occasional paroxysms of jealous anguish were violent enough to alarm her sister. Margot asseverated in vain that probably Waldenek was merely addressing an abstraction ; that he had given his ' Rhapsodie ' this title because it seemed to him poetical and appropriate to the theme. Valérie scouted the notion with scorn, upbraiding the ignorance which had prompted it, and Margot was forced to hold her peace.

The sisters were installed in their places, as may be guessed, long before the hour fixed for the beginning of the Recital ; Valérie's eyes, while awaiting Waldenek's appearance, fixing themselves on the printed words which had never ceased to haunt her since she had first read them. *To the Beloved. To the Beloved.* They seemed to burn themselves into heart and brain ; even when eager applause announced the advent of the artist, and her eyes sought his face, they seemed to float in letters of fire between her and him.

The Master surpassed himself ; so everyone said, and so the unbounded delight of the audience would seem to testify ; but these three words made discord for Valérie of all sweetness and charm and harmony. She could not enjoy, she scarcely heard, so great was the tumult within her, so feverish her expectation and despair.

At last Waldenek took his seat before the instrument for the

last time, struck a few preliminary chords, and then the hush which supervened was broken by the first low notes of what seemed to be a Pastoral. Lo! as Valérie listened she heard the piping of the birds, the fluttering of the leaves at dawn, the still, drowsy stir of awakening nature—it recalled to her that morning in the woods of the Neroberg, and a pang of utter rage and woe swept over her heart. This morning of mornings which she had deemed absolutely hers, sacred to her alone, had been to him but one of many; he had known other such; in the company of this unknown Beloved of his he had roamed other woods and found other dawn-music just as heavenly sweet. Now the strain was swelling louder, more impetuous; the sun was piercing the shimmering leaves, drawing out the warm wood spices; the flowers were unfolding; steps were falling upon the quiet woodland paths. To Valérie it seemed as though she could hear the bounding of the Master's heart in the triumphant jubilant notes; a suggestion of infinite delight, of ever-increasing, ever more intoxicating joy; and then the sounds died away, and only low rippling notes seemed to indicate expectation. A kind of wonder fell upon Valérie; it seemed to her that the Master was wondering too; every soul, indeed, of that vast listening multitude waited and wondered. And then, what was this? Woven into this strange new work came fragments of other compositions familiar to all who had before heard Waldenek play, most tenderly, blissfully familiar to Valérie. Her day of days was hers still; her forest sanctuary had not been desecrated; she was harkening to herself playing, as she had played that summer dawn, with the Master for her only listener.

An almost intolerable ecstasy flooded her soul as she realised that through the music Waldenek was speaking to her, was recalling, in exquisite, inimitable fashion, the rapture of their meeting. He had understood, then, all that she would have had the music tell him; and now he was answering, telling her, too, many things which she scarcely dared to believe. He had wandered off into higher flights of melody. This, at least, had been never heard before. In this new strain there was passionate entreaty, insistent pleading, and mingled with it the same suggestion of infinite joy. *To the Beloved—the Beloved!*

The scene swam before Valérie's eyes; the figure of the Master grew indistinct; the music sounded far away. She had been pressing close to Margot as though for support, and now

began to lean more heavily. After a moment Margot turned and looked at her, and found that she had swooned. It was not possible to move until the close of the performance, and even then some little time elapsed before Margot could convey her sister to the open air. Meanwhile, to her great relief, Valérie revived of herself, and when at last there was a move was able to walk with her sister's assistance to the door. Margot only breathed freely when they found themselves in the cab driving towards home; Valérie's extraordinary emotion terrified her. It was not so much her sister's faintness which alarmed her as the fear that she should not be sufficiently recovered to leave the hall with the rest of the audience. She dreaded an encounter with Waldenek in Valérie's present condition of mind. If she were to see him what might she not say—what might she not do?

In the cab Valérie sat beside her, one little cold hand in hers, her face white as wax, and yet illuminated by some inward light of happiness, her eyes dilated and shining too. Only once she spoke:

'Margot, you heard that Rhapsodie, *To the Beloved?* The Beloved is I.'

Margot did not answer; she did not know the grounds on which Valérie based her conviction. She had realised that during the playing of the Rhapsodie her sister's feelings had undergone a change; the agitation to which she was a prey was rather the agitation of happiness than of despair; nevertheless she could only think the sudden revulsion transitory, and deem that Valérie had added one more hallucination to those which already beset her.

When they reached home she endeavoured to persuade her sister to lie down, brought her tea, and tried by many loving words to calm her excitement. But Valérie scoffed at the notion of rest; she was not tired, she said; she was too well, too happy. She walked up and down the room, according to her habit when agitated, letting her untasted tea grow cold, and humming to herself little snatches of Waldenek's music. At every ring of the bell she paused, listening eagerly; then she would resume her walk. Frequently when she heard wheels in the street below she would rush to the window, turning away with a disappointed face as the sound was lost in the distance.

To Margot, whose nerves were also of the highly-strung order, Valérie's feverish expectation and suspense gradually became intolerable. At last, to distract her thoughts and if possible those of her sister, she drew down the blinds, and lighting the candles

on the piano, sat down and began to play one of Chopin's Preludes, unconsciously choosing the well-known No. 15, wherein it is supposed that during a storm of rain the great composer chronicled his impatience and longing at the non-appearance of his loved one at the appointed hour. Soon she was absorbed in the beauty of the work, and did not notice that Valérie had once more paused in the centre of the room, as though listening to sounds other than those which proceeded from the piano. It was not until a sudden draught of air made the candles flicker and grow dim that she raised her eyes to her sister's face; then, in response to the announcement plainly written there, she turned slowly on her music-stool.

Just within the open door immediately behind her stood Paul Waldenek. His eyes, looking past her, sought those of Valérie. It was from his face that her sister's had caught the reflection of hope and bewildering joy. He now advanced a step or two further into the room and stretched out his hands, still looking earnestly at Valérie.

'I have made my heart speak,' he said; 'will you make it sing?'

CHAPTER XVIII.

FINALE CON MOLTO SENTIMENTO.

If there had been a semblance of unreality about the first encounter with Waldenek, it seemed to Margot that this second meeting was still more dreamlike and extraordinary. She scarcely realised his meaning, until, clasping Valérie's hand in his, he approached Margot herself, stooping until those dark, ardent eyes of his were on a level with her own.

'Patriarch Margot,' he said, 'will you give me this child?'

It seemed impossible, as she said to herself, when a few minutes afterwards she sat in the chill darkness of her own little room; it must be impossible! And yet Waldenek had spoken plainly. He, the great master-musician, the composer with whose fame all Europe was ringing—he wanted to marry her little Valérie, her child, her baby, whom she had scarcely thought fit to walk alone. He and Valérie had rhapsodised together while Margot had sat staring at them, just now, from her music-stool. He had told of all the wonderful things which he had known and felt when Valérie had played to him on the Neroberg; how he

had received a revelation that here was a spirit kindred to his own, that Valérie's genius was the complement of his; that her life was meant to merge into his, her sweet love to be his glory and his crown. Since that morning, he said, the thought of Valérie had been ever present to him; what need, therefore, for delay? Following her cue he had let his music speak for him to-day, and now he had come for his answer. And then Valérie had chimed in, and talked a great deal of rapturous nonsense. No time was needed, Margot was informed, for souls like Waldenek's and hers to ripen acquaintance; they had known each other intimately and entirely from the first moment they had met; they had also loved each other, belonged to each other. Margot looked at the two beautiful radiant faces and was mute. By-and-by she rose and stole softly from the room.

'They do not want me,' she said to herself with cold lips as she crept up the stairs. Amid her astonishment, her doubts, the joy which she could not help feeling in this unlooked-for blissful triumph of her sister, there was a stealthy undercurrent of pain. Valérie would want her no more. Her bird had spread its wings and would soon soar high, never to return to the humble nest again. But this thought must not be dwelt on; an almost intolerable swelling of the heart warned her of its danger. Tonight she would think only of Valérie; she would try to rejoice unselfishly in her happiness and to put away her own fears.

'He looks kind,' she said to herself over and over again. 'He has kind eyes—I think he will be good to her.'

By-and-by sounds of music in the room below made her start. Waldenek and Valérie were playing together.

Surely there was never such a whimsical courtship as this! The two musicians met daily; both were deeply in love; but it would seem as much with the art as with the personality of each other. Their talk was chiefly of music; scarcely had they met before the instruments were in requisition; they wooed each other with exquisite sounds.

They were to be married early in the year, Waldenek intending to proceed immediately afterwards to America to fulfil a long-promised engagement. They would return in six months, so Margot must not be unhappy. No, Margot would not be unhappy; she would take care of herself while they were away.

'If ever we have a settled home, you must live with us, my Bon Papa,' said Valérie.

Margot smiled rather sadly.

' You will not be likely to have a settled home for some time, I fancy. Your husband will be obliged to lead something of a wandering life.'

Valérie's eyes lit up.

' Think of it, Margot. A wandering life with him ; always listening to him, always with him ! He and I roaming the world together !'

Margot said nothing, but Valérie noticed the expression of her half-averted face.

' You shall wander too, little sister of my heart,' she cried, throwing her arms around her neck ; ' you shall wander with us. There shall be a little room for our Bon Papa wherever we go.'

Margot gently unwound the clinging arms and turned away, attempting to speak lightly.

' No, no ; Bon Papa must stay at home and work,' she said. ' I shall grow so rich and make my house so smart that you will be proud to come and stay with me.'

' Yes, that will be delightful,' said Valérie. ' When we come you shall have such music, my Margot ! Do you know Paul is writing a series of Romances for the violin and piano which he and I are to play together ? He has already written one. It is a dream. Listen—it goes so.'

The Cremona was brought out once more, and Margot was left to do battle with her own sore heart.

Great happiness is apt to be selfish. These two artists, at no time prone to consider consequences, or to take heed of things outside their own particular emotions, failed to realise what havoc their union must make in the life of the little sister whose all was thus about to be taken from her. It did not strike them that their raptures must necessarily cause her pain, sympathetic though she was ; that the plans and projects in which she could have no part must fill her with a sense of desolation. Wrapped up in each other and in their art, they did not notice how the struggle to maintain a semblance of cheerfulness grew daily more hard for Margot, and how the effort to repress the jealous anguish of which she was conscious in seeing Valérie's entire absorption was at times scarcely possible to her.

She was of course glad to see Valérie so happy. Was not Valérie's happiness the object of her life ? For as long as she could remember, had not her toils and her prayers been directed to this end ? And now Valérie had of a sudden been raised to a far higher pinnacle of bliss than her sister had ever dared to hope

for. Even to the anxious, suspicious eyes of the duenna it became evident that, not only as an artist, but as a man, Waldenek was worthy of Valérie's choice. Margot watched him narrowly, and day by day her respect and affection for her prospective brother-in-law increased. He was indeed dreamy, and, to a certain extent, unpractical ; there was an almost childlike simplicity about him, a curious unworldliness which made Margot sometimes wonder how it was that he had contrived to make his way so well in the past, and to ask herself how it would fare with the two erratic beings when her beloved, impulsive, inconsequent little Valérie had joined her fate to his. Waldenek was, moreover, large-minded and generous, incapable of an ill-natured thought or a mean action. His devotion to Valérie was wonderful, and Margot thought it would last.

So great was Waldenek's desire to obtain recognition for Valérie that he had not patience to wait until their union had taken place. About a month after their engagement, he made arrangements for her to play with him at a concert at St. James's Hall. The affair was of course easily managed once he took it in hand ; it seemed strange to Margot, indeed, to find how easily. This time there was no necessity for exertion, no anxieties, no difficulties ; everything ran smoothly. Waldenek had the matter so very much at heart that, on this occasion, he proved himself to be wideawake and businesslike. No one else needed to move in the matter. Margot found it odd to watch preparations going forward for this great event and to realise that she had no part in them ; it was curious and painful to think that Valérie no longer needed her help. She would play in public, and the greatest artist of the time would accompany her, not the little sister whose assistance had been hitherto considered an indispensable part of the programme. Margot would not be beside her to sustain her if she grew nervous or flurried, to prompt her with advice, to assist at her triumph. Margot was not wanted now.

When the auspicious day came she helped Valérie to dress—that at least was her department ; here her loving, deft little fingers were of some use. Valérie was flushed and excited, laughing and chattering gaily. Margot tried to answer in the same tone, and Valérie was too preoccupied to notice that her cheerfulness was forced. She did not weep—no tears, at least, came to her eyes—but she wept inwardly, feeling as though scalding, bitter drops were falling on her heart.

Valérie's success was immediate and complete. It could

scarcely be otherwise. As the future Madame Waldenek she would have received a sympathetic reception even had her own talent been less great; but when the beautiful, interesting little personage who was so soon to bear the great artist's name proved to possess a genius scarcely less wonderful than his, the enthusiasm of the audience knew no bounds. Indeed, no such musical treat had for years been offered to the public. The pieces chosen were of the Master's own composition—wild, sweet, exquisite music, played to absolute perfection by these two whose spirits seemed to be one. Even Margot was satisfied with the manner in which Waldenek subordinated himself to Valérie, his performance blending itself with hers in a manner which sustained without ever dominating it.

A tide of immense unselfish joy swept over her heart as, watching from a side door, she beheld her sister led forth again and again to receive enthusiastic applause.

By-and-by Valérie rejoined her, sparkling and triumphant, hugging tightly an immense bouquet.

'Ah, Margot, what a difference!' she cried joyously. 'This is success, if you like!'

Margot would not dash her exultation by a word of reproach; she buried her face in the flowers instead of replying, and by-and-by Valérie was called away again. Then Margot allowed the irrepressible sadness within her free scope. Oh, yes, what a difference! This was success indeed, and she had had no hand in it. Hers had been the struggles and the fruitless labours, and Waldenek, by uplifting his finger, had secured the crown. Oh, it was hard! She had tried her best, she had sacrificed herself, and to no purpose; she could not even console herself with the thought that it was through her that Valérie had made acquaintance with him who had brought all this glory into her life. No, no, little Valérie had done it all for herself; she had come, and seen, and conquered. Margot, who would fain have given her heart's blood to further her interests, had, with all her good-will and anxiety, achieved nothing. A few paces away from her Valérie was standing facing an expectant multitude; hundreds of eyes were fixed on her, hundreds of hands applauded her. How often had she dreamt of such a scene; and now, as Valérie said, what a difference! Was there half so much savour, after all, in a triumph achieved at so little cost? It would have been sweeter, even to Valérie, she thought, if they two had worked for it together. *This was not the success they both had planned; this was not Valérie*

Kostolitz taking the world by storm entirely by the power of her own genius ; it was through the influence of her future husband that she obtained a hearing. Their wild, sweet dream of long ago would never be realised now : Valérie and she would no longer toil together ; and her own past toils had been unrewarded, her sacrifices fruitless.

As she stood alone and silent there came to her with an exceedingly bitter pang the thought of how great one sacrifice had been. For Valérie's sake she had cast away her personal happiness ; all the love she had to give had been bestowed on John Croft, and yet when he had offered her his own—when he had bent over her, pleading and entreating—she had silenced and dismissed him. Not even he, not all that he had to give her, could tempt her from her loyalty to Valérie. She was indispensable to Valérie, she had said ; Valérie could not live without her ; and now the impossible had come to pass : Valérie wanted her no more ! Valérie had done with her, and John Croft had done with her too. He had not written to condole with her when she had told him of Valérie's illness, and he did not write now to congratulate her on Valérie's engagement. He must know of it —everyone knew of it. This tit-bit of musical intelligence had appeared in all the papers ; most of their acquaintances had written to congratulate them, and John Croft was silent. Well, what could she expect—what consideration had she shown *him* ? Had she not proved to him of how little account she held his devotion ? She had rebuffed and offended him before, and he had forgiven her ; but this time he had been too deeply wounded ; he had cast her outside his life. So, while Valérie played and the public applauded, Margot, the faithful duenna who had till now lived but for her, listened apathetically, and was only conscious of her own breaking heart.

The feeling of the subtle division between her and Valérie increased as the wedding-day drew near. The little bride was so taken up with plans and projects for her new life that the thought of the approaching separation found no place in her mind. Like many of her kind, Valérie was wont to let any strong emotion take entire possession of her for the time, excluding or deadening all others. She had, moreover, a constitutional dislike to dwelling on anything sad or unsatisfactory ; therefore, even if she had noticed Margot's inward distress, she would in all probability have striven to banish the thought of it. Margot had always wanted her to be happy, and now she was happy. True,

she and Waldenek were going away, but it would only be for a few months, and then they would all be together again, and she would have so much to tell Margot. This was Valérie's mental attitude whenever she was troubled by a passing recollection of the change in her sister's life which her own approaching nuptials must cause. Margot, on her side, made no complaint; gave utterance to no affectionate regrets. Joined to her genuine desire that Valérie's happiness should be absolutely unshadowed, there was a certain element of wounded pride. If her personal feelings were not considered she would not allude to them herself; her pain was of no account—no one should guess at it. She was very busy just then, employing every spare moment in sewing for Valérie. All the underclothing of the little trousseau which she insisted on preparing for her was made by her own hands. She committed extravagances in the matter of fine cambric and real lace, which she meant to expiate afterwards by months of rigid personal economy. It consoled her to remember that she might still suffer and make sacrifices for Valérie, even after she had lost her.

It was on a cold, raw January day that Margot finally handed over her treasure to the keeping of Paul Waldenek. By his express desire—a desire which indeed coincided with the sisters' own feelings—the wedding was kept strictly private.

'Just you and I,' Waldenek had said, looking dreamily and tenderly at his betrothed.

'You will want me,' cried Margot, with a sudden flash in her blue eyes. 'She is mine still, remember! I must give her away.'

'Oh, yes, Margot must come!' exclaimed Valérie. 'My Patriarch must be there, or the ceremony will not be valid.'

'Oh, yes, our Margot must come, of course,' agreed the Master, turning his eyes towards her with one of those kind, sympathetic glances which, when vouchsafed to her, caused Margot to forgive him for having robbed her of her darling. There were times—when he came down from the clouds—when he seemed to understand and feel for her more than Valérie; but unfortunately he so soon went up into the clouds again. A word from Valérie, a note from her Cremona, and such minor things as the aching heart of her faithful sister were forgotten.

'I only meant,' he pursued, still looking sympathetically at Margot, 'we will not let anyone else know. We will keep the public out. Our great day—our sacred day—must be kept to ourselves.'

His glance had wandered off to Valérie now, and its expression made clear to Margot that 'ourselves' in his thought did not include her.

Well, the wedding-day came, and the sisters drove together to the church. Valérie was in white. She had insisted on this; and when Waldenek saw her thus attired he had not demurred. 'It would remind him of his vision in the woods,' he said.

The ceremony did not take long, and, regardless of all precedent, the three drove back together in the hired brougham which had conveyed the sisters to the church. Margot sat with her back to the horse, gazing at the little gold ring which looked so oddly out of place on Valérie's childish finger, and repeating to herself, 'She is married; Valérie is married.'

The bride and bridegroom were also commenting on the wondrous fact of their union; but in spite of the evidence of her senses Margot could not in the least realise what had taken place. She felt cold, and dull, and hard; smiling and answering mechanically when they looked at or addressed her; shedding no tears, and scarcely conscious of sadness.

'By-and-by I shall have time enough to feel sad,' she said to herself.

After the simple wedding breakfast, the newly married couple were to start. They were to proceed to Liverpool that afternoon, and to embark on the following morning. Just as they were rising from the table Waldenek appeared to remember something, and, drawing a folded paper from the pocket of his coat, he held it out to Valérie.

'A Wedding Song,' he said, 'for thee and me. I wrote it this morning.'

Valérie's face lit up. 'Ah,' she cried, 'this is like you! And to think it is I who have inspired this. Let me see—how does it go? Ah, it is lovely! Quick, let us try it! My violin, Margot—where is my violin? Paul, come to the piano.'

In another moment they were absorbed in the Wedding Song, lost to all sense of external things. Margot, with a swelling heart, went upstairs. She could feel *now*. Even these few brief moments, the last which Valérie might spend at home, were denied to her. She had counted on, hungered for, a few words just at the end. While the others had been eating she had been longing for the moment to come when Valérie would go with her upstairs; then she would have folded her in her arms, relieving the love and sorrow in her heart by a passionate

embrace. Surely Valérie would have turned to her then and clung to her : in spite of her recent excitement and absorption, Margot had never doubted the sincerity of the little creature's love for her. But now the 'Wedding Song' had swept away this last hope.

She locked her sister's boxes, strapped up the rugs, and prepared a little basket of provisions for the journey ; then she sat down and waited quietly till the sound of wheels in the street below warned her that the carriage had arrived which was to take them to the station. It had been ordered in good time, so there were still a few minutes to spare for Valérie's remaining preparations. Running downstairs, Margot approached the musicians.

'Valérie, you must come now. The carriage is here. I would not disturb you till it came, but you must change your dress, remember.'

'Already !' exclaimed Valérie. 'Did you hear my Wedding Song, Margot ? It is—— Ah, I cannot tell you what it is ! Why did you not stay and listen ? Now you will not hear it till we come back.'

'I was obliged to get everything ready, you know,' said Margot. 'But come, you must make haste or you will miss the train.'

'Oh, that would be dreadful,' cried Valérie, rushing upstairs. 'Paul has made all his preparations. Quick, where is my dress ? Ah, you have put it all ready, my good little Margot. Do help me to fasten it. Quick, quick, I do not want to miss the train. Margot, that Wedding Song is divine. Paul has surpassed himself.'

'I am very glad. Now here is your hat. Let me tie your veil for you; but first, Valérie——' Her voice faltered suddenly, choking sobs rose in her throat ; she had been about to say : 'First let me kiss you,' when the sudden rush of emotion had overpowered her. She stood still, her face averted, and Valérie in her haste and excitement did not guess why she had suddenly broken off.

'Never mind the veil,' she cried hurriedly ; 'we can put it on in the carriage. Margot, do run down and see that my Cremona is in its case. Paul may have thought of putting it in, but you had better make sure.'

The opportunity was gone. Margot ran downstairs as desired, dashing the tears from her eyes and swallowing down her sobs.

No, she would not cry, not now ; there would be time enough to cry afterwards. Valérie must not part from her in sadness.

On the way to the station she again insisted on sitting opposite the newly married pair, watching them vaguely as they bent their heads together over the manuscript sheet of music, Waldenek's white hair and pale, strongly-marked features contrasting with the brightness and bloom of his young bride. The chubby hand which bore the ridiculous wedding-ring was passed through his arm ; now and then the fingers drummed upon his sleeve. Margot, presently leaning forward, took hold of the other hand, kissing the fingers gently, one by one. Dear little soft, warm fingers ! She would console herself with the remembrance of their touch later on when she was alone. Valérie looked up for a moment and smiled across at her, giving Margot's hand a little squeeze ; then, once more leaning against Waldenek, she went on humming the Wedding Song in his ear.

They had only a few minutes to spare when they arrived at the station, and all was bustle and confusion until the travellers and their belongings were safely installed in their carriage.

'There are two minutes more,' said Margot. 'Lean out, Valérie, that I may kiss you ! But first put this little basket safely away. I thought you might be hungry on the journey, and I have put in some provisions for you. See, there are some biscuits and some sandwiches—sandwiches of pâté de lièvre ; you know you are always fond of pâté de lièvre.'

'Oh, Margot !' cried Valérie, and, of a sudden, two great round tears jumped out on her cheeks. Somehow this little proof of homely forethought recalled in a moment all that she had hitherto forgotten. Margot's constant care and tender love ; the home life ended for ever. 'Oh, Margot !' she cried again with a little gasp, and suddenly sprang out of the carriage and on to the platform, flinging her arms round Margot's neck. 'Oh, my little sister, my little mother, you think of everything and I have never thought of you ! No, I will not go away from you ; I will stay with you ; I will never leave you, my beloved Bon Papa. No, no, it is useless to talk to me ; I will not go !'

Porters were noisily clapping the carriage doors ; already the guard was preparing to wave his green flag. Waldenek, in much anxiety and alarm, had also descended ; but Valérie still clung weeping to Margot.

'Does she really wish to stay with you ?' asked the husband,

pale with anxiety. ‘I will not take her away if it makes her unhappy.’

‘No, no,’ said Margot with a wan smile. ‘In two minutes she will have forgotten her sadness. My little Valérie, God bless you! You are my own Valérie still, and nothing will change you. Take her, Paul, and be good to her. My darling, goodbye.’

Between them they forced Valérie into the carriage, and the train moved off, Paul standing by the window, while his wife clung to him weeping. Margot, through a sudden rush of tears, watched that window till it was out of sight, being comforted at the last by the apparition of a little hand frantically waving.

‘She will be all right now,’ she said, and fell to sobbing.

The carriage which had conveyed the party to the station was, by Waldenek’s order, to drive Margot home again; and once within its friendly shelter she allowed her grief to take its course unchecked.

Valérie’s sudden display of feeling had been, it is true, inexpressibly sweet and consoling to her, but at the same time it accentuated her sense of loss. It was indeed her own little Valérie who had gone from her—Valérie, who had clung to her and depended on her, and wanted her, all her life. Would she not need her still? Would even Waldenek be to her just what she was? As for Margot herself, how was she to live now? What was she to live for? She thought of going back to the empty house, which would be so gloomy, so lonely, without that sunny presence; of the silence which Valérie’s babble, scarcely less musical in her sister’s ears than the sounds of her Cremona, would no more break; she pictured herself crossing the narrow hall, mounting with lagging steps the shabby stairs, finding herself at last in the familiar room where everything would speak to her of Valérie, and Valérie herself would be absent. There would be no need now to worry about anything; it seemed to Margot that even the worries connected with Valérie had a certain sweetness in them. There would be no one to be anxious about; no one to plan for; no one to scold. It seemed to her as if the whole framework of her life had suddenly collapsed, and she felt neither strength nor inclination to build it up anew. How should she get through the months that must elapse before she saw her darling again? How should she get through this one day even, the day of departure of which many weary hours remained to run? The carriage was bowling along all too swiftly. Soon she would be at home, if it

could be called home now, shut in with her own loneliness and misery. The carriage had now turned into the Park, and, acting on a sudden impulse, Margot called to the driver to stop.

'I will get out here,' she said, 'and walk the rest of the way.'

Heaven knew the way would be short enough. She plodded slowly along under the leafless trees, drops of moisture falling on her as she passed. The early wintry sunset was making a transitory glory of its own in the murky sky, building up primrose and saffron fires above the great piles of buildings; the path beneath her feet was wet, and the air raw and chilly, but she did not quicken her pace; she regretted every step that brought her nearer home.

At length, however, the Park was left behind, and she wandered lingeringly along the streets which seemed so empty now that Valérie's little figure was not flitting by her side. Several times people turned and looked at her, but she did not notice their curious, pitying glances, nor realise how woe-begone was her face, nor the fact that she was sobbing aloud as she walked.

Here was Pitt Street at last, and yonder was the little house, the lonely, desolate, dreadful little house which she must enter. She climbed the steps reluctantly, and drew her latch-key from her pocket, but her hand was so tremulous and her eyes so dim that she bungled sadly in her attempts to make it fit the lock.

'You had better let me do that for you,' said a voice beside her.

While she had been fumbling with the key someone had suddenly crossed the street and bounded up the steps; a hand that she knew was now stretched forth to take possession, not only of the key, but of the hand which held it.

Margot turned round, and the tears, of which her eyes had been full, brimmed over and rolled down her cheeks. The cloud of sadness had been so heavy on her heart that the sudden apparition of John Croft could not at once dissipate it; it seemed to her, indeed, at the moment, that his presence was more than she could bear. She turned her little pitiful face towards him, and uplifted her sweet blue drowned eyes. Meeting his tender, compassionate gaze, it seemed to her natural to speak to him, as she had always done, of her troubles.

'Oh, Sir John,' she cried, 'Valérie is gone! I have no one to take care of now.'

'You have been taking care of people too long,' said Croft. 'It is time for you to be taken care of yourself.'

Something in the tone of his voice, in the expression of his face, made her drop her eyes ; but after a moment's pause she looked up, saying with a sob :

' Valérie was married this morning.'

' I know,' said Croft ; ' that is why I have come. I want to console you.'

The little fast-darkening street was very quiet, save where at the farther end a milkman was going his rounds.

' You knew,' cried Margot quickly, ' and you have been silent till now. You never wrote—I did not think you cared.'

' I was biding my time,' said John. ' I felt that your loss was my gain. I thought that in your sorrow you would perhaps turn to me.'

His other hand was now stretched forth to clasp her disengaged one ; she did not refuse it, but answered rather the letter of his words than the spirit in which they were spoken.

' You are glad of my sorrow. That is not kind.'

' I am glad,' repeated Sir John steadily, ' of my own opportunity.'

' I thought you had forgotten me,' said Margot, still plaintively : it was so natural to make her plaint to him of all that troubled her. ' When I told you that Valérie was ill I thought you would have written.'

' You told me not to write,' remarked Sir John, looking down at her with a smile in his eyes. ' No, no,' he pursued quickly, as he saw her lip quiver, ' I cannot allow you to think me unkind. I did not get that letter until some weeks after you wrote it—I was yachting, and it followed me about—and then, do you know what I did ? I came straight to London. You did not forbid me to come, you know, though you forbade me to write. Somehow I had a kind of feeling that you wanted me, Margot. I thought I might help and advise you ; you know all my experience has not taught me that my advice is not a valuable thing.' He was laughing outright now, and Margot smiled too, faintly and tremulously. Croft went on more gravely :

' When I came here I found you had already gone away, and Jane told me there was better news of Valérie. So then I resolved to wait. You did not want me then ; I would wait until you did. I desired Jane not to mention that I had called. Do you think me very indiscreet, Margot ?'

' Not indiscreet,' said Margot, with a little droop of the lip ; ' but—not very kind.'

Instead of looking conscience-stricken at the rebuke, Sir John's face lit up; this tacit acknowledgment of her dependence on him filled him with ecstasy.

'Have I been very cruel?' he cried with tender triumph. 'Ah, sweet, all is fair in love and war, you know! When I first saw Valérie's engagement announced I rejoiced, but I resolved to make no sign; the time was not yet ripe for it. But I have been waiting and watching day by day. I found out, also through Jane—oh, Jane is my very good friend!—when the wedding would take place, and you would be left alone. I knew you would be coming home about this time from the station, and I have been walking about waiting for you. You know what I have been waiting for, Margot?'

Margot looked up at him without speaking, a great glow of happiness driving away the sadness from her face.

'I am waiting,' pursued Sir John, 'for an invitation to come in. You forbade me the house once, you know, and I resolved never again to cross your doorstep without receiving permission from your own lips.'

Margot hastily drew away the hand which held the key, bending her shy, blushing, happy face till it was on a level with the key-hole; her hand shook very much, but she at last succeeded in opening the door.

Then, turning again towards Croft, and timidly suffering the fingers which he still held to close on his, she pulled him gently forward, crying: 'Come in, dear friend; come in.'

'No,' said Sir John in a voice which vibrated with passion, 'I am not your friend, Margot; I can never be your friend again. I must be more to you; I will have all or nothing. If I come into your house now, I must come into your heart, and into your life.'

'Then, love,' said Margot, very tenderly and earnestly, 'dear love, come in.'

THE END.

Trials of the Wife of a Literary Man.

NOVELS without end have been written setting forth the sufferings of the Literary Man, who has awakened from a moment of folly to find himself mated with a spiritual clown, or with what is even more paralysing, one of the 'Doras' of this world. Harrowing pictures have been drawn of some 'Gifted Hopkins' driven, by lack of sympathy in his own home, to seek that precious balm elsewhere. He only craves to pour out his soul—at every possible opportunity—on the subject which is possessing it for the time being, and while he excites himself to frenzy as to the truth of the claims of some False Dmitri, or the ultimate fate of Don Sebastian, he is met by a wife's wandering eye and vague smile, followed, after a polite pause, by an instance of Tommy's drollness or Mary's precocious wit.

It is not every woman who is clever enough to catch up her husband's valuable arguments and reproduce them as if they were her own—to his wonder and admiration—nor, indeed, is it every man who would be content with having the mirror held up to his own nature. Yet, after all, this is perhaps quite the best that he has any right to expect. Marriage—most of us have found that out—is an affair of compromises. Few people are attracted to each other by their intellectual qualities, and, if they are, they are generally in the first order of prig. A man falls in love with a girl because she is pretty, or lively, or sympathetic; it is surely unjust to demand that she should be intellectual as well. As to the girls, they fall in love with a man because he has fallen in love with them, or because there is nobody else. Either way, neither has the right to blame the other.

But it must not be supposed that every literary man's wife is capable of feeling the trials of his position; to some the position itself is only a matter of pride. This kind of wife is a very serious person, who invests everything that touches her with a halo of solemnity delightful to the One Who Looks On. As a rule,

her life has been passed among scenes quite different from those into which her marriage has plunged her, and she begins her new career densely ignorant of subjects and details which have been the literature of the nursery to most other people. But in a surprisingly short time she has got by heart the masonic signs and pass-words of her new state of *existence*, and if she sometimes misquotes or misapplies them she never finds it out. This is not the sort of woman who will lie awake at night reddening with shame and mortification while she watches the *bévues* of which she has been guilty stand in a row opposite her bed and make a bow.

The man who marries a lady cast in this mould is usually as deficient in humour as herself, and is prepared to take her at her own valuation—thus making her worse. He is, in every sense, *le mari de sa femme*, and most certainly each is the elective affinity of the other. It is rare indeed that the husband turns out a Mr. Bennett, and unkind things were said by Darcy, and have been repeated by other people, about Mr. Bennett's habit of extracting entertainment from his incomparable lady. Yet, what could the poor man do? There was only one alternative possible, and that led to the gallows.

The foregoing remarks have been made to show that all the trials and grievances are not on one side, as some eloquent orators would have us believe, and that no prejudice exists in the mind of the writer against the male sex. The Rights and Wrongs of Man are not, however, the subject of this paper, which is, as they say in churches, 'For Women Only.'

Now, of course, the typical instance of a literary man's wife who has attained the very height or deep of suffering is Mrs. Carlyle. But let us leave her on one side; partly because nobody with any sense or consideration for his fellows would revive that war cry, but partly, also, because it is difficult to give our entire sympathy to Mrs. Carlyle's grievances. Besides, quite a new crop of sufferings have sprung up since Mrs. Carlyle discoursed so eloquently upon hers.

In modern days budding authors and authoresses (especially the authoresses) are a fruitful source of danger to the literary man's wife. If the husband happens to be the editor of a magazine he will be inundated with manuscript poems or novels, accompanied very frequently by appeals *ad misericordiam*. Amidst the bundle of hopeless mediocrities he may come upon something better than the rest, and then, full of

benevolent ideas, he comes to his wife and tells her that a Miss So-and-So has really written rather a clever story, and as she says she is coming up to town on business, should they ask her to come and spend a day or two with them? The wife has very likely seen this experiment tried before at the houses of other literary friends, and if she is a person who can learn by experience—it is not every woman who can, and no men—she has ‘inwardly digested’ the lesson. So she points out firmly that if the future Sappho or embryo George Eliot turn out to be shy, or impish, or gushing, it is she and not he who will have to bear the burden. Afternoon tea she will consent to, but nothing more until she is sure of her ground. The husband, whose zeal in the matter has been quite disinterested, gives way, as he cannot help doing, and probably lives to thank her for her foresight.

The trials to which the wife of a literary man is subjected naturally differ according to his temperament and mode of life, but there is one which, from Mrs. Carlyle downwards, all the wives have in common, though in a greater or less degree. The wife must be prepared to be ignored, consciously or unconsciously, by people who are either unaware that she exists at all, or are profoundly indifferent to the fact. How far this position will be felt by the lady who is passed over depends to a certain extent on the amount of social ambition she may possess, but more on her common sense, which will tell her whether the slight is deliberate or unintentional. As to the husband, if he thinks the proposed dinner or visit will bore him, he assumes airs of virtue and declines; but, if it happens to be a question of his favourite sport or latest craze—golf, or Roman camps, or Norman architecture—then it is to be feared, ah, greatly feared, that he will make one of that country house party. On the other hand, sportsmanlike fairness must admit that the case is sometimes reversed. The lady is literary, and the author of *A Murmuring Heart*. The husband is undistinguished. *He* cannot be left out, and has been found weeping in the harness room, while his wife shone in the gilded saloon. ‘These tears,’ as Mr. Frederick Bayham said, ‘were manly, sir, manly.’

If the literary man is an eager, enthusiastic being, ready to unbosom himself to any audience, however unpromising, how much worse is it when the wife has some special knowledge or intelligence that may make her opinion really of some use. ‘I should like to read you this,’ he will say, coming in with a sheaf of loose papers in his hand, all mixed, and all requiring correc-

tion, 'as your judgment is a criterion of that of the average public.' And after this hardly flattering commendation, he proceeds to read out an article on some obscure subject to which the wife has never given a thought, stopping all the while to correct a phrase or insert a missing word with his hovering pen, and expecting the unfortunate woman to be ready with an intelligent criticism at the end of it.

Is any creature in the world more wearisome than the man or woman who is a person of one idea, or who habitually talks 'shop'? Yet is anybody a worse sinner in this respect than the literary man? Morning, noon, and night does he expatiate interminably upon the subject to which he is at that moment giving his attention, say Frederick the Great. However congenial or familiar the theme may be to the wife, it is impossible for anyone to follow without special study the details of hitherto unsuspected conspiracies, or exult in a proper spirit over important discoveries. Yet for months together—in fact, till one burning question is replaced by another—she must be content to have the topic recur at every meal. Perhaps *she* would like to speak of the matters which interest *her*—French memoirs, astronomy, the Borgias, let us say—but she is never given a chance, for men have a wonderful power of assuming that what interests them is bound to interest other people. 'What was the cause of the Thirty Years War, and who were the principal generals?' a literary man once asked his wife as they were having an early breakfast before starting for their summer quarters, and, having produced the required information, it was months ere the luckless woman was allowed to converse about anything else. The years were dated by her in an entirely original manner. 'Oh, that was the summer we talked of Confucius,' 'that was the George Washington summer,' and so on. On one point only she was firm—her walks should not be invaded by this phylloxera. If she was to keep hold of her sanity at all, she must possess her own soul for some part of the day. The demon might breakfast with her, dine with her, mingle with her dreams, but take a constitutional with her he should not!

Perhaps at the outset, when young and full of vigour, the wife may have had visions of correcting her husband's shortcomings, as wives always contrive to do in a sentimental novel. But as the years roll on, and her power of fight becomes weakened, she gives up the struggle, finding it far less trouble to do things herself. Often a morbidly anxious person, she even ceases to discompose herself when her husband dashes into the room and

announces that he has burnt a letter containing some editor's cheque. 'Oh no, you haven't,' she replies calmly, 'it is sure to turn up all right,' and of course it does. Neither does she pay the slightest attention to his asseverations when he mislays a book that he had it at such a table, and by no possibility could it be found on any other. A prolonged search—which occurs several times every day—will invariably end in the production of the missing volume in the precise spot which 'he had never been near,' and if she is wise she soon learns to begin her search from that very place, like the Laird with the salmon. 'Show me a hopeless cast,' he said, after an empty day, and there he had him.

As to arranging journeys or recollecting her husband's independent engagements, the wife speedily discovers that if either are to be carried through she must take the burden on her own shoulders. And instead of the husband being grateful for being saved from pitfalls of all kinds, he probably lets off impatient gibes at his wife's memory. 'Of course I could have done it perfectly well myself if you had only told me what to do, or what to say,' he exclaims, and very likely he could. Still, it grows tiresome to remark eight or nine times over, 'Have you written that letter? Have you answered that invitation?' and she will infinitely prefer to do the thing herself.

This division of labour works very well as long as the wife 'enjoys good health,' but there are moments when it has its inconveniences. Occasionally she may be obliged to take to her bed, and when she is up again the doctor declares that she will not get strong till she has had a thorough change. Her husband is anxious about her, and is desirous to take her anywhere that will cure her most quickly; but a wife endowed with any sense will resolutely stay at home, and get better when and how she can. 'Oh, yes,' she says to the doctor, 'I've no doubt a change would do me good, and if I only had the Maiden Aunt of fiction who would carry me off to her lovely country house, where I could lie wrapped in shawls under the trees and drink bowls of soup every hour, I would go to-morrow. But if you think it would be a rest to me to have my husband sit down to the writing-table and begin "What hotel shall I write to? What rooms shall I order? What train shall we go by? What time shall I order the cab?" you are wrong! I must mend at home or not at all.' Change may be possible for the wife of a barrister, a soldier, or a clergyman, but not for the wife of a literary man. From these and other reasons it is quite clear that foreign travel

can be no enjoyment to the literary man's wife, and her husband, recognising this fact, will probably urge her to accept an invitation to join a friend when he is safely engaged for some weeks hunting for *crannogs*, whatever they may be, or seeking oghams in the wilds of Ireland. For one weak moment she thinks she may manage it, and then her long and ghastly experience comes to her aid. 'I don't see how I can. Remember you have promised to lecture at Sheffield on the third of next month, and if I am not here you will be sure to get into some mess about it.' 'What nonsense!' he cries indignantly, 'you can't want to go if you make such a silly excuse! Just as if I couldn't manage my own lecture by myself.' He does his very utmost to persuade her, but she stands firm, and what happens? He departs for his remote corner of the West, with the date of the lecture repeated to him *ad nauseam*, both by word of mouth and in subsequent letters. At last, late one Saturday night, with Bank Holiday treading on the heels of Sunday, the hapless victim gets two letters by the same post, one from the Secretary of the Lecture Committee saying that the date was now drawing near and no subject had as yet been fixed on, and till that was done nobody would take tickets. Might he say it would be upon 'The Women of the Fronde'? a period with which he knew the lecturer to be familiar. The other letter is from the literary man himself, and begins 'For heaven's sake wire at once and tell me the date of the lecture, and the subject.' The wife, who is not of the order of woman that keeps her husband's letters in a scented box, sends hastily for the waste-paper basket, and turns over the contents of two in the hope of discovering the name of a telegraph station stamped in the corner of one of the fragments. There is none, and her only resource is to write out two concise telegrams, one to her husband with the date and the subject fixed on by the secretary, and the other to the secretary himself, and despatch them to the Head Office to go up by post. The other offices have been closed hours ago.

But the wife knows quite well that her trials in the matter are not yet over. The husband has carefully avoided answering any of her numerous questions as to how long he is staying in his present quarters, and what he means to do next. The journey is a long and broken one, and letters are apt to come irregularly; and besides, as he has paid no attention to any of her remarks hitherto, what guarantee has she got that the substance of her telegrams will reach his supraliminal self? The

other is no good. However, she does all she can ; looks up every conceivable train and steamer that may lie between him and his ultimate goal, and calculates carefully all his dates. These, with a letter of minute instructions, she sends off next day.

Her efforts are so far crowned with success that he finally grasps the date of the lecture ; but through the succeeding days letters and telegrams contradict each other with wonderful regularity as to places and seasons. But we are often told, whether truly or not, that the capacity of human suffering has its limits, and it may be supposed that this particular woman had reached hers.

To those who reflect on the trials of Lady Byron, Harriet Shelley, or Mrs. Robert Burns, the sufferings enumerated above may seem paltry and not worth mentioning. And, indeed, to a person fond of managing or with an inborn love of playing Providence it is possible that they might even be productive of pure enjoyment. But it is not every woman who has these advantages, and before she is made practical by sheer pressure of circumstances, when her nature is naturally shiftless and indolent, she will have to pass through a purifying fire of considerable intensity. From this she emerges 'one entire and perfect chrysolite.'

K.

Gert Trichart's Sanctuary.

(AN AFRICAN SPORTING YARN.)

WE were out on the Transvaal High Veld. By we I mean Tom Corporal, Captain Johnson, Henry Mourse, myself, and our servants. Our occupation, shooting; our home, the ox-waggon. Those who have visited South Africa know the style of the thing: the buck-tent waggon, the mob of horses, the span of sixteen oxen, and the odds and ends of Kaffir pots, sails, kettles, saddles and bridles, with the inevitable string of biltong hanging on lines, or strewed upon the tent of the waggon, drying in the sun. In addition to the waggon, as there was not room for four to sleep within it, we had improvised a 'lean-to' by means of a spare sail, and it was under this canopy that the scene about to be described took place some twenty years ago.

'Wake up, you lazy beggar!' Such were the words which reached me, accompanied by a gentle reminder in the shape of a riding-boot, which alighted on the spot rightly judged by the thrower to be about the situation occupied by my head, stowed away with the rest of my carcase within the folds of a horse-blanket. 'Wake up!' my tormenter continued. 'You know we have to make an early start this morning, so as to get on to old Trichart's ground by midday. Don't you remember that we are to have our grand game-drive this afternoon?'

My reply to this attack was merely to ensconce myself more firmly within the folds of my covering, hoping to be left at peace to woo the fickle goddess for another ten minutes. But it was not to be. Rough hands seized the lower end of my blanket, and in the twinkling of an eye I was literally 'spilled' upon the ground.

'I do declare,' said Tom Corporal, the culprit, 'that you are getting lazier than ever! Here it is just about five o'clock, a glorious day before you, and yet you lie sleeping there like an overfed hog.'

This was too much, and my answer was to heave the jack-boot back at Tom's head with all my energy. He ducked to avoid it; the boot flew on over his head, and made every endeavour to force its way down the capacious throat of our 'voorlooper,' who had just crawled from beneath the waggon, and was at this very instant taking his first stretch and yawn. With a roar he clapped his hands to his mouth and swore he had been half murdered. It is wonderful, however, what healing properties a 'tot' of square-face has 'on the veld.' Presently all was peace and contentment, the rest of the 'boys,' as they crept from their warm lairs, being given the 'remedy,' although they lacked the excuse for its use.

Thus having relieved my hurt feelings, patched up the mouth of the 'voorlooper,' and remonstrated with Tom for causing the uproar, I got on to my feet and took a look round.

Just outside the 'lean-to' the natives had already got a fire of 'buffalo chips' under way, and thereon a large kettle was humming merrily, which betokened coffee. Now, of all the memories connected with my hunting days in South Africa, the early cup of coffee (made by a man who understands his job) is amongst the most cherished. It was so comforting. Presently, when the coffee had been put into the kettle, the savoury aroma seemed to permeate the blankets of my two laggard friends in the waggon, for within a few minutes they had turned out, and we four stood around the fire with steaming cups of delicious coffee in our hands.

On the Transvaal High Veld, which is four to five thousand feet above sea-level, the hour before sunrise is extremely cold in winter (the time of year of which I write), and the warmth of a fire is very welcome until such time as old Sol pops up and floods the country with his lustre, light, and heat. By twelve o'clock it is very comforting to find shade from his fierce rays. At five o'clock, however, his power wanes and slowly dies, and a chill, cold air arises, piercing to the marrow those who are ill-clad or without warm and heavy blankets, the nights being bitterly cold. As we stood chatting and drinking our coffee, Hans Botha, a friend of Gert Trichart, rode up from his farm-house, close handy. We had been squatting and shooting on his ground for over a week, accepting his most kind hospitality, which included presents of milk, pumpkins, butter, and water-melons—great luxuries on the veld; in return for which we gave him the carcases of the game we killed, out of which he made a stock of biltong, and a good supply of square-face; and when he came to the waggon of an evening to have a

chat over the fire after a hard day's hunting, as an extra treat we would give him a glass of Kinahan's LL Whisky, which invariably was accepted with gladness, and helped the 'verdomde rooineks' to overcome somewhat Hans Botha's antipathy to Englishmen generally—for the British were then at Pretoria, and the country groaned, or rather pretended to groan, under the British yoke, represented in the person of Sir Owen Lanyon, a brave and fearless officer, a kind friend, but an unwise administrator. Botha was a fine specimen of humanity, somewhat dirty certainly, but tall, broad, and of that rugged appearance with which we have learned to associate the 'Boer'; and we found the man to be our very good friend, for did he not get old Gert Trichart to give us a day in his preserve? an indulgence, I believe, accorded to no other Englishmen before or since.

Rolling out of his saddle, Hans greeted us, depositing upon our palms, in turn, a limp hand (about the size of a leg of mutton) by way of shaking hands, and then announced his intention of breakfasting with us and guiding us over the veld to old Trichart's house. Needless to say we welcomed him cordially; and presently Harry, the cook, placed before us a steaming pot of stew, bread, butter, and coffee, and we all fell to.

Hans Botha did not require much help with that pot of stew, but he was not singular, for we were all hungry, and after finishing the stew had to requisition a larded haunch of cold springbok to top up with. During breakfast Hans explained in Dutch (which I interpreted) the programme for the day. Thus he spoke:

'Well, boys, I think I have been able to show you some game since you have been on my place, eh? and for Englishmen you have shot fairly well; but, my boys, I'm going to open your eyes to-day! It is like this. Oom Gert is a very cunning old man, and he understands the habit of game fairly well does Gert. Well, he made a plan. He said, "These verdomde Englishe are all over the place—shooting, shooting, shooting, driving the game wild, but never hitting anything. I will spoil their sport. I will make a 'kraal' of my farm, and I will let nobody shoot upon my farm, and the game will soon learn that they have a sanctuary there, and when they are shot at they will soon understand that on my place they have peace; and then I can keep my game—my wildebeeste, my blesbok, and my springbok—and the verdomde rooineks, if they come on my farm, will suffer for their trespass, and I will kill the buck as I want meat and their skins." Boys, Oom Gert was quite right. Directly a shot is now fired anywhere

near his place—which is very big, being four farms of six thousand acres each in one block—the old bulls of the herds cry, “Trichart to ! Trichart to !” and away they will go as hard as their legs will carry them for the sanctuary. Arrived, however, within the bounds which they have learnt to know, they slow down and begin to graze, and the baffled sportsman must perforce turn away, for Gert is very strict. Boys,’ continued Hans, ‘the place teems with game. There are thousands and thousands of all sorts ; and presently I will guide you over to Gert’s house, and Gert will tell you how to act ; and you will be able to fire all your cartridges away if you are smart, for Gert has a plan, and it is a good plan, and we will see how you Englishmen get on. Ha ! ha ! we shall see ! Now,’ added Hans (referring, of course, to his breakfast), ‘I am full. Come, let us ride, for we have fifteen miles to cover before we get on to the ground, and as we shall have to go a roundabout way so as not to disturb the buck, we have not much time to lose.’

So the horses were brought in and saddled, cartridge-belts and bags filled, and presently all five rode out across the plain bound for Trichart’s farm.

The ride was rather monotonous ; we cantered over ridge after ridge of rolling prairie, bare of timber as far as the eye could reach, a very wilderness of waving grass, broken occasionally by kopjes and shallow valleys, with the inevitable spruit running down the centre, broadening out at intervals into circular water-holes, called ‘pans,’ from which wild duck would rise as we passed, and, circling high overhead, make their way to other waters higher up the valley. Every now and again we came across a herd of buck or wildebeeste presenting an excellent chance of a shot, but rode solemnly on without firing at them, reserving ourselves for the great event, Hans insisting that by firing heavily now we might upset all the plans made by Trichart for our benefit ; so the game saved their hides, and we had to possess our souls in patience.

Presently Hans pointed to a white spot in the distance, and told us that it was Gert Trichart’s house, that we must now keep away to the left and approach it from the other side, so as not to scare the buck ; this we proceeded to do, and half an hour or so later we had off-saddled at Trichart’s farm and were being introduced to old Trichart himself.

Gert Trichart stood six feet three at least in his veld schoens, and as he received us on the threshold of his cottage I thought to myself that I had seldom seen a nobler physique. His hair was

snow-white, and a long white beard reached to his waist, his rugged, tanned face was lighted up by a pair of keen, piercing blue eyes, and although but roughly clad in a somewhat soiled moleskin suit of the kind usually worn by the Transvaal Dutchmen, Gert Trichart's massive proportions lent them dignity and set at naught their atrocious cut. Though he was close on sixty, his brisk manner and ever-moving blue eyes made one think that his locks were prematurely white, and when his clear tones rang out as he hailed his friend Hans Botha his voice confirmed this impression.

Such a man was Gert Trichart, who had made a sanctuary for the fast-diminishing herds of game of the High Veld; a worthy representative indeed of the hardy Boer pioneers who have since won back their independence and the land of their adoption.

'Good Morrow, nephew,' said Gert to Hans Botha.

'Good Morrow, uncle,' replied the younger man Hans. 'I have brought the Englishmen, as you see. They are good fellows, and are very much pleased that you have asked them to shoot.'

'Good Morrow, Englishmen,' said Gert. 'Come in and sit and coffee drink, for my "sheep" will soon be thinking of returning to the "kraal," and if you are not ready and in your places early you may lose your chance; and if you do not take your chance when I offer it, it may not come again.'

As the old man spoke I explained to my friends the drift of his remarks, and we thrust on one after the other into the 'sit carmer,' or parlour, where we found the good lady of the house presiding over the coffee kettle, and having duly shaken hands with the flabby old lady, we sat round on heavy wooden chairs or settees in dead silence whilst the old 'frau' solemnly dispensed her coffee, for which we showed our gratitude by uttering a word like 'donkey,' meaning 'thank you,' in rotation as we received it. Thus we sat until we had finished, when Hans Botha told his friend that the little Englishman with the hooked nose could understand and speak the 'taal,' thus indicating myself.

Old Trichart turned his blue eyes on me and stared me up and down. 'Are you a "rooi bichey"?' said he to me abruptly. 'No,' I answered, 'but my friend here is one,' pointing to Captain Johnson.

'Ah, yes,' said Gert, 'but what are you?' I answered and said, 'I am a Scotchman.'

But said he, 'Are there then Scotch Jews?'

'No,' said I, 'there are no Scotch Jews.'

'How, then,' said he, 'can you be a Scotchman?—for you are certainly a Jew.'

It was all in vain that I denied the soft impeachment; Trichart had made up his mind that I was a Jew, and a Jew I remained. Thus through my hooked nose I suffered much, especially at the hands of my companions, for the name stuck to me like wax. When Gert Trichart had definitely decided that I was a Jew, he said that if we would all come on to the 'stoep,' he would explain what we must do to prepare for our shoot, and would show us the ground. So we all trooped out of the 'sit carmer' on to the verandah, a feature of every self-respecting Dutchman's house.

Gert Trichart's unpretentious residence stood high, in fact in a most commanding position. It was at the head of one of the valleys which I have previously described. This valley appeared to be about a mile and a half long, when it flattened out at the lowest point into a very large 'pan,' or lagoon. Immediately in front of Gert's house was a spring of water, now (during the dry season) weak and giving out a small supply, but in the wet season a heavy flow came forth, which with the help of the surface waters had washed out a broad and deep slit—sometimes a rushing torrent, now almost dry—which reached from the house down to the aforesaid 'pan,' getting bigger and deeper as it lengthened, its course cleaving the valley asunder.

Calling our attention first to the direction whence we had ridden in the morning, Trichart said: 'Now, Englishmen, look over yonder and tell me what you see. Here, take this glass,' handing Captain Johnson a telescope, 'and tell me if you can see my "sheep." ' Thus adjured, we scanned the distance. As far as the eye could reach the plain was dotted with herds of game. 'You see them, don't you?' said Gert. 'Look, yonder, on your left, that dark-looking lot are wildebeeste. There must be at least two hundred in that lot, and beyond them are springbok; and, to the right, that long moving line is a herd of blesbok shifting for fresh pasture; and in the valleys you would find thousands more. Those we cannot see; but, as it is, Englishmen, you can see as many as you will find in the same space now anywhere on the High Veld. Those are my "sheep," and they shall come to their "kraal"—their sanctuary when they are disturbed—and if you can hit them,

Englishmen—I don't suppose you can' (this with a knowing wink at Hans Botha)—'you may shoot a hundred apiece, if you don't run short of cartridges. I shall not shoot, for there will be no stand for Hans Botha and myself. We will sit on the "stoep" here and see what you boys can do. Almighty! but I shall laugh if any of you get a fright at the last moment, for my "sheep" have smelt powder before, and want a deal of stopping when they have made up their minds to get home. Well, Hans, what is the time? Three o'clock? Good; it is time to set to work. Englishmen, here is my plan. You see this deep sluit running from the house through the valley into the pan below? Well, when my "sheep" come home, scared by a shot out yonder in the veld, they pass through four drifts or fords in that sluit, for they cannot get into my kraal by any other way, unless they enter below the pan or behind my house, and both those ways are long. When disturbed my "sheep" take the shortest road, and as I sit here on my stoep at sunset each day, I see them streaming through those drifts to sleep within their sanctuary. Now, Englishmen, I propose to send four men out on horseback; two will start above my house, two will start from below the pan; they will ride wide of the game. When they have gone two miles one man of each party will stand still whilst the other two ride on for another mile, when they will circle round towards each other, and when they see each other they will fire off their rifles, and all the game will work towards the "kraal," and the two men who stayed behind, one on the left and the other on the right, will be seen by the game, and the game will be frightened by them and will not break away, but will take the shortest cut to the place of safety beyond the drifts. Well, Englishmen, when the horsemen start to drive the game, you must take up your positions; one man must take possession of each of the four drifts, and so long as you can keep the game in front of you and prevent their crossing the sluit so long may you shoot, but directly my "sheep" have forced their way over you must fire no more, for then they will be on sacred ground. Now you know all about it, my horsemen will start at once; so you had better draw lots for positions, and then go down and make ready.'

As a result of the drawing the drift nearest the house fell to Henry Mourse, the second to Tom Corporal, the third to myself, and the drift nearest the "pan" to Captain Johnson. These were the only points at which the game could cross—the sluit was elsewhere impracticable.

Shortly after we had left the stoep old Gert bawled out, 'Jew! Jew!' I involuntarily turned round. 'Ha! ha!' he laughed, 'I knew I was right. "Little Jew," let your friends take their horses; you may have to follow up and kill any bucks that may chance to be hit.' The old man was pleased to be facetious, and I could hear Hans and him laughing together over his pleasantry.

I was an old hand at High Veld game, and, as a matter of fact, had proved myself to be able to gallop and shoot with the best of the Boers we had come across during our trip, and as I left Mourse and Corporal I advised them strongly to use their revolvers if an ugly rush came, as the rapid succession of shots might check the game should the crack of the rifle fail to do so. I also advised that they should not show themselves unless forced to do so at the last moment.

Arrived at my drift I took my stand on the left side, where the bank of the *sluit* was on a level with my chest, and having picketed my horse a little lower down, close handy but out of sight, proceeded to undo several packages of Martini-Henri ammunition, which I laid out in rows on the bank. I then loaded my revolver and rifle, and I laid both on the bank ready for instant use, and thus fully prepared awaited developments.

I had not long to wait. The natives whom Gert Trichart had sent out on horseback had not lost much time, for from the distance came the distinct crack of a rifle, followed immediately by a second. These were evidently the shots fired to start the game; a few minutes later came the sound of a shot out beyond the 'pan,' and then again from the high ground beyond Gert's house. Glancing in that direction I saw old Gert standing on his verandah waving his hat, and borne faintly on the breeze came the words: 'Look out! Here they come!' Down in the valley, I, of course, could see nothing. I judged the sky-line to be about 500 yards range from where I was posted, so keeping my eye roving backwards and forwards I watched the ridge over which I knew the buck would break. At this moment over the brow of the hill straight in front of me poured a deluge of game. First came the small but fleet springbok, followed by hundreds of blesbok, in separate herds with leaders well in front; then to their left and right the sky-line was broken by more herds of what nature I had no further time to note, for with incredible speed the first comers had galloped down the slope straight for my drift, and were now within 300 yards. Waiting one moment longer until they

got within 100 yards, I covered the leader and fired the first shot. The buck I aimed at leapt high into the air and fell dead in his tracks, whilst the rest of the herd, on hearing the shot, swerved to the right, and swept along parallel to the sluit towards Tom Corporal's drift. I had stopped the first rush. Jamming a fresh cartridge in I was just in time to open fire on a herd of wildebeeste which came like a squadron of cavalry full pelt for my place ; the leader was well within a hundred yards when I fired and bowled him over, but the others came straight on heedless of his fate. Running on to the bank to show myself, revolver in hand, I fired shot after shot at the advancing avalanche, and had the satisfaction of seeing the leaders hesitate and then swerve away down towards Johnson's drift. Thus they came on troop after troop, herd after herd, mass after mass, charging down upon our position in ever-increasing numbers.

The cracking of the rifles was now continuous from all four drifts, and I fired shot after shot as the immense concourse of game surged and galloped backwards and forwards on the slope before me, vainly striving to gain a passage to their sanctuary. Presently the game opposite my drift circled back towards the ridge over which they had come, and there stood for a moment bewildered. This gave me time to look round and see how my chums fared. Johnson was cracking away on my left, but Tom Corporal on my right was silent, but only for a moment. A tremendous mass of animals which had collected in front of Mourse at this moment charged down on Tom's drift. Bang ! bang ! went his rifle. Bang ! as they got closer still, and then he was forced to follow my example and show himself on the bank, firing his revolver into the thick. Scarcely did he hold his post : the game, as game will, grew very bold in the face of danger, and in their desperation had almost conquered their fear of man. Now I became busy myself once more, and had the satisfaction of nailing a fine hartebeeste out of a troop of about twenty which had been amongst the last to arrive on the scene. But what was the matter up yonder ? A horseman was chasing a large herd of wildebeeste ! Was the man mad ? Could it be ? Yes, it was Corporal—he had left his post. The game on either hand had noticed this as soon as I, for they immediately began to draw in the direction of Corporal's drift. In a second I had made up my mind. His drift must be occupied, or the day was over. Running to Maresco, my horse, I threw the reins over his head, and myself into the saddle, and revolver in hand flew up the bank and

galloped as hard as I could towards Corporal's drift. What a race it was, who would get there first, the mass of game rendered frantic by the fusillade and Tom's presence amongst them, or Maresco and I. How I hallooed and shouted as I galloped, hoping to frighten the brutes with my voice; but I might have saved myself the exertion, for nothing could be heard above the thundering noise of the hoofs. It was not far to go, but we were just too late. Maresco dashed across the leaders as they were within twenty or thirty yards of the drift, and I fired my revolver at them, but it was useless. We were immediately surrounded and involved in the stampede, and found it impossible to stem that living tide. Jostled and hustled, Maresco was carried forward with the stream, and a moment later I found myself beyond the drift, amongst the flying buck on sacred ground. The day's sport was over, thanks to Tom's madness. Seeing what had happened, Mourse and Johnson left their positions, and in another five minutes the thousands of game had made good their escape and had disappeared within the limits of the 'kraal.'

Tom Corporal could never explain how it came to pass that he left his post—he said he was seized with an insane idea to chase the big lot he had turned; but we were all content with our experience and with the splendid bag which resulted.

As we rode back to the house after having polished off the wounded buck, old Gert and Hans came out to meet us.

'Verdom, my "little Jew,"' said he to me laughing, 'but you can shoot! It was good to see the way you stopped those rushes; you are a lucky "little Jew" though to be here all right. Almighty, when I saw you taken into the drift by that living stream, I made sure you would be overwhelmed and trampled flat. You owe your safety to your horse. Come, Jew! your kind are always ready for a bargain, what will you take for your horse? He would carry me well, for he is strong and fat. Come, little man, will 20*l.* tempt you?'

'No, nor 200*l.*,' answered I, 'for Maresco is the best friend I have; this is the second time he has saved my life!'

'Ah, well,' said Gert, 'you are right to stick to a good friend; but even Maresco could not have saved you had it not happened that the drift you passed through is the broadest one of the lot. But, come in, Englishmen, come in; let us eat and drink, for you have far to ride, and Hans must guide you to your waggon before the light of the moon fails you.'

A. H. D. COCHRANE.

Alkestis.

A LKESTIS, willing for her lord to die,
 Stands at his couch to speak her parting word
 No trace of human weakness dims her eye,
 But all his fainting, feeble soul is stirred
 By grief and self-abhorrence. With a cry
 He hides his shameful head, and lets her speak half-heard.

'Weep not, Admetos, for my worthless life—
 Worthy at last in thus preserving thine ;
 That which is joyful to thy loving wife
 Should bring to thee a joy surpassing mine.—
 Seeing that from no bitterness or strife,
 Or weary, dread disease, I seek the shades benign.

'Death hath been conquered, for I freely die ;
 Bereft of thee 'twere foolishness to live.
 Thrice blessed in the blessed fields shall I
 Render the one sole gift that I could give—
 Drinking from streams of love that never dry,
 After whose taste all joys seem mean and fugitive.

'Perhaps—for what is yonder no man knows—
 In sleep of Hades all things are forgot ;
 For me oblivion, for thee repose,
 Were no unfitting issue of our lot.
 Love's light, be sure, in ceaseless beauty glows,
 And the great sun shines still, although it reach us not.

'A piteous thing is life, unless we may
 Be raised by love above the fear of pain.
 Bind ye mine eyes, and let me take my way
 Fearless along the path where fears are vain ;
 The grisly messenger not long will stay,
 But summons to the doom for which my heart is fain.

' Give the last greeting. Let my joy be thine,
 Nor vex thy soul with impious regret.
 O golden meadows, land of corn and vine !
 If for a moment my poor eyes are wet,
 Love, to gain all things, must its all resign,
 And fain would see the stars before the sun has set.

' My soul is pleading for an utter peace,
 Beyond the wiles of hope, the woes of fear.
 As, when the glories of the day decrease,
 Sunset and pageantry of stars appear,
 So do I ask that thoughts of earth may cease,
 And calmer thoughts, more fit the world of shades, come near.

 ' Let us not chide the gods, for they are wise,
 And strong beyond the strength of all appeal ;
 The mystery that in their doing lies
 Perhaps our future fortunes may reveal.
 We call no mortal happy till he dies :
 I go to learn what good the gates of life conceal.'

Say not her great and willing sacrifice
 Was lost on him, whose soul seemed wholly base ;
 Love, passioned to devotion, has no price
 To be appraised in common market-place,
 Nor brings reward apportioned to device
 Of those who barter gift for gift and grace for grace.

With earthly wand we mete not things divine,
 Nor measure the Invisible by the seen.
 The unperturbed heavens give forth no sign
 To touch our trivial lives, unmoved, serene ;
 But loftiest deeds can pierce their inner shrine,
 And in the last resort the gods will intervene.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

Lady Griselda's Dream.

SCENE—*A London Drawing Room, with the usual blue china, white paint, and Eastern portières. Everything wears a look of fastidious freshness, and a vague perfume of dried roses and orange blossom hangs about the draperies. It is a dark winter afternoon.* LADY GRISELDA FAIRWEATHER sits in a low chair, facing the fire, with a letter in her hand. Her face is distinguished, though pale and thin; she has the good looks that ripen into beauty in a happy entourage. As it is, she is faded, and the hand that holds the paper between her face and the glow of the hearth looks unwholesomely fragile beneath its load of rings.

Lady Griselda (aloud to herself). One more look at it! . . . The handwriting says nothing.

A Voice at the door. May one come in to stroke one's Auntie Grissel and run home again?

Lady G. (rousing herself). Oh, come in, Sissie. Have you brought Baby?

Enter LADY LUCY COHEN, her sister, fair and plump and bubbling with health and spirits. She is followed by a smart nurse carrying the First-born. Picture: the two women bend over the bundle of white satin and cashmere, LUCY absorbed and for the moment forgetful of her pretty and exquisitely tailored person; GRISELDA, at once absent and wistful, delicately passing her fingers over the baby's dimples, and smiling vaguely at her sister's maternal babble.

Lady Lucy. Now, Nurse, you can take Baby home in the carriage. I shall take a hansom after a few minutes' gossip with you, Grissy. Ta, my angelest angel! (*Exit Infant and Nurse.*)

Now, old lady, one can see you want a little smartening up.
Been thinking again?

Lady G. (glancing at the clock). No, darling, only rather tired.
I was playing all the afternoon, and, you know, when I forget myself
at the piano, I always get done up. [Looks at the clock again.]

Lady L. I'd like to chop up that piano of yours! (Suddenly bursts out laughing, but stops and looks demure.) If you weren't
such a very staid old lady I should say you were—— What's the
matter with the clock?

Lady G. (nervously). I thought it was going to strike.

Lady L. Well, it won't bite you. And, Grissy, who made that
gown? Is your idiot of a maid suddenly inspired, or have you
taken my advice and gone to Jones, at last? I always said you
were splendid material. Is it Jones?

Lady G. (blushing). This gown? Why, it's nothing; I and
my woman arranged it between us.

Lady L. Then you are inspired; or—— (She laughs again, and,
suddenly getting up, stands in front of her sister.) Grissy, I do
believe you have an appointment—someone coming to tea and
confidences; someone very, very—— That clock really is all right!
Bon, je file! I'm not going to spoil sport. Ta-ta, sweet one! Oh
how delicious your tea-table looks—coquettishly dainty—and your
January roses, like June itself! Grissy! (She raises her long eye-
glasses and looks steadfastly and seriously at her sister.) I do hope
he—whoever he is—will appreciate the set of your sleeve! No,
he can't: it takes a woman (with a sigh). Well, you shan't be
teased.

Lady G. (twisting her rings nervously). You don't tease, and
I should have liked to tell you, and—and ask your advice. But
Baby takes all your attention, doesn't he? (With a suddenly
tremulous voice.) I feel as if I must speak to some one at last.
Lucy! . . . Eugene has come back. I mean, is coming to see me.

Lady L. Eugene? After all those years, Grissel?—and you
let him, the heartless jilt!

Lady G. Lucy!

Lady L. (angrily). Haven't you allowed him to wreck your life
enough?

Lady G. (weakly). He may have misunderstood something.
I always think if one doesn't meet face to face . . . And you
know, Lucy, men are so different from us. They want change,
they want laughter and brilliance and a ready smile, and God
knows I hadn't——

Lady L. (impetuously). Who took all that from you? What a splendid bright girl you were before he threw you over without a word to explain . . . Oh if it had been me!

[Clenches her little hands.]

Lady G. (with her eyes on the fire). One can't 'explain' a change of that sort. I think he did right to say nothing; perhaps an explanation would have been an insult. Yes . . . they change, and I . . . Oh Lucy! Lucy! Lucy! (throws herself into the younger woman's arms), how I loved that man!

Lady L. (gives her a good-natured pat). I know! And a fine halo you set round your love. Fancy a woman of your brains putting up with the crack-brained idiot for an hour. *I could never understand it.*

Lady G. (without listening to her). How happy I was laying at his feet my whole heart's treasure. (*Sobbing.*) Desolate as I've been ever since, I don't think I would change my short dream for all the years of untroubled life I might have had but for that. My beautiful love! [Her head drops on her sister's shoulder.]

Lady L. There, there! (*Strokes her hair, while making, for her own satisfaction, a little grimace of impatience and bewilderment.*) You poor old thing! You unpractical, mooning, dear thing! If all women demanded as much as you—— (*Gives a little gurgling laugh of amusement.*) If I clamoured for poetry and love and all the rest of it from my very unpoetic old man! . . . He finds it easier to give one diamonds, and then (*naïvely*) there's Baby. Consider, too, what would the future generation be if we *all* went in for the superior sentiments you indulge in.

Lady G. (raises her head and dries her eyes). Is it my fault that I'm still a lonely woman?

Lady L. (brightly). Well, I think it is. A young man strikes your fancy: while he is tiring of you you are building up that fancy into a passion—I wonder if it is nice to be in love?—and when he goes the way of all flesh and leaves you, in search of new worlds to conquer, instead of bravely shaking the dream off, you sit brooding over your wrong; a wrong that—Goodness me!—nine women out of ten have to experience in the course of their lives, most likely, if they made a fuss and let the world know about it.

Lady G. (murmurs). I loved my dream!

Lady L. (sharply). Yes! for something like ten years you have given yourself up to the luxury of nursing a grievance, and in the meanwhile, scrubby, uninteresting little women like me manage to have a fairly good time, hurting nobody, not even themselves.

Lady G. (faintly contemptuous). What a negative good! I wanted to be . . . oh! . . . so much . . . [She stops and broods.]

Lady L. You wanted to be the artist's inspiration, of course. *Entendu!* But when the divine fire left your painter-man, where were you then? And everyone but you saw that he was bored by you and the Aims and everything grandiose, and was longing to live a jolly, vulgar, commonplace life.

Lady G. (coldly). How could you understand!

Lady L. (with good humour). My dear girl, I'm out of patience with you over this visitor of yours. (*She stops and laughs.*) Is it providential, though? The dream may vanish before the man. You are waiting, you are dressed for, the Eugene of ten years ago, spiritualised by the world-fight and by the self-enforced renunciation of his ideal love—is that the expression, eh? Now, I would bet, this afternoon's Eugene Sinclair is a portly and impressive person, not ill-provided with adipose deposit.

[Walks across the room humming a waltz.]

Lady G. (smiles faintly and loftily). You say rather vulgar things sometimes, darling, without meaning them.

Lady L. (with incorrigible, good-natured flippancy). Lamentable result of home-life on the lower plane, my angel in white cashmere. Oh, Grissy, promise me one thing!

[She rests her little plump hands on her sister's slender shoulders and looks into her eyes with genuine seriousness as they stand face to face.]

Lady G. (nervously). What, darling?

Lady L. Never wear anything but white Indian cashmere, and don't let anyone persuade you to give up those long sweeping lines. You never could be smart, dearest; but you're better than smart, like that. I'm glad I insisted on your keeping grand-papa's sapphires; they're so barbaric, they make me feel two inches high; on you they're romantic. And now good-bye, naughty girl. I can't advise you, for you're not in an advisable mood. Have a good flirt, and—By-the-bye, didn't he marry?

Lady G. Yes. (*Turns away with agitation.*) I suppose his wife's dead.

Lady L. (slowly). H'm—well. All I beg is, don't make a fool of yourself. The world's overstocked, and a woman who can show off the Fairweather sapphires as you do, Grissel, can't afford to make a scandal. It's—wasteful! Really good-bye, my own.

[Whisks out of the room with a little laugh.]

Lady G. (*sinks on the sofa with a sigh of relief*). I am tired and excited when I want to be fresh and cool.

[*The glow of the fire is intensified in the cold failing light outside the windows. She stretches a languid hand towards the bell, but lets it fall, and with a pleased smile on her mouth, her head sinks gently into the cushions and her eyes close. She seems to hear a slight noise above the rumbling of the street, which has grown far-off and dim. The portière has been raised, and a tall man stands in the doorway. As her eyes open he walks slowly down the length of the room, coming gradually into the spreading circle of light that the high-piled coals and blue flame of the logs give out. She raises her pale hands feebly and lets them drop, lying powerless with her eyes riveted on the newcomer. He walks round the little tea-table and kneels beside her, bends his face and lets his lips rest on hers in a long kiss. Releasing her he remains kneeling, and they look into each other's face with rapture.*

Lady G. Eugene! At last!—at last!

Eugene. Griselda, beautiful love! Not changed, only a richer, nobler beauty.

Lady G. Your face is thinner and your eyes hollow, but it is my Eugene, his smile and his kiss. The smile like the sun itself, the kiss—I've dreamt of it!

Eugene (*still murmuring*). Beautiful love, beautiful angel! (*He strokes her hand. There is a pause. GRISELDA, who has lain with her eyes half closed, stirs, and makes a movement to leave her sofa. EUGENE gently presses her back in her place.*) No, don't get up. I love to see you stretched there among the delicate white draperies which lie about your feet vaguely in the shadow where the firelight doesn't reach. That sudden sparkle of the falling log has set a red light upon your gown and touched the little curls on your forehead with bronze. It is a Florentine portrait. Oh, the dear delicate meek throat!—the sweet wrists!

[*Kisses them.*

Lady G. (*murmurs*). I must be dreaming.

Eugene. That's what women always say. You admit so little indulgence into your scheme of life that a touch of joy overcomes you. 'It must be a dream,' you say, and only pain is real to you.

Lady G. (*after a pause*). That seems true to me.

Eugene (*absently, playing with her fingers*). We must live,

from day to day. (*Bends and kisses them passionately, then looks up and smiles brilliantly.*) Are they dream-kisses?

Lady G. Let me have a long look at the dear face. (*He raises his head slowly until the flickering firelight falls vaguely on cheek and hair and eyes.*) You will never grow old, Eugene. You are graver and quieter. (Have you thought much of me out in the world? Have you been sorry for going away those years ago?) Ah, but it is still my Eugene. Eugene! Eugene! (*She closes her eyes, and releasing her fingers passes them over his face.*) That is what I used to do. I should know your face if I were blind. Your eyes shine out of the dark at me, full of youth and hope and confidence.

Eugene (smiles). Adorable folly! My Grissel, we old people can well say that Love never grows grey. But now we must talk. I've done wrong to come to you, as I did wrong to go away when the foolish, aimless restlessness came upon me. But I've come to you as a man always comes at last to a good woman—for strength, for confidence to carry out my resolves. My wife—

[*LADY G. starts.*

Eugene (slowly). Yes, Grissel; I married some years later. Playing the fool first, till I got tired and had spent all my money, I turned to the simple pleasures of a pastoral life in a country vicarage—(*he shrugs his shoulders*)—painting apple-blossom and studying the vicar's niece. (*A pause.*) She had delicious hands, and played the piano divinely. So I, as an artist, fell in love with the hands as they danced over the ivory and ebony, and— (*Breaks off with a laugh.*) I seem to be telling you the plot of a young ladies' novel! Well, men are all fools in the same way, I fancy. The beautiful hands are faded, and the piano is replaced by the babies' crying. I married her, as many men marry a passing fancy, from a luckless sense of honour. Honourable, was it, to drag a poor little innocent girl, whose life should have been an idyll among the roses, into the squalor of real life?

[*While EUGENE speaks, LADY G. has been making an effort to rise. She finds herself curiously powerless. She lies still, but her breast rises and falls in quick, short breaths.*

Lady G. So it was true, then; you are married. Well, what do you want me to do?

Eugene. Nothing. But let me come sometimes, and be kind to me, that I may go away heartened up, and soothed by the perfume of harmonious graciousness that hangs about you.

Lady G. The passive rôle again ! To live beautifully and be admired. Why should some women be doomed to this ? Eugene, I could almost envy my little sister, with her intolerable husband and her young baby. She at least is not told she must be content to live on dreams.

Eugene (tenderly). Such beautiful dreams, love ! Are you not proud to be the artist's inspiration, his friend and *consolatrice* ? The first and foremost woman in the world for him ?

[*LADY G.* is silent.]

[*Another log falls apart and a thin blue flame starts up.*

LADY G.'s cheeks glisten with the tears that fall fast.
EUGENE, still on the floor at her feet, caresses one of her hands ; with the other she wipes her tears. She looks attentively at him. The room grows dimmer and circle of light round them increases in intensity. A strange stillness fills the air.

Lady G. Not thinner ; not a day older. As I look at you, those years fall away ; and you grow younger.

Eugenie (absently twisting a ring on her finger). How, 'thinner and older' ? It is only yesterday I saw you.

Lady G. It seems yesterday now. But they have been long years to me. Oh, it's long since forgiven.

Eugene (smiles radiantly). Why, you have been dreaming, my darling. See, here are my roses that I brought you as my New Year's gift.

Lady G. (startled). What do you mean ? What you told me—your wife—

Eugene (with the same unearthly smile). You were dreaming, my sweetheart. All misery is not real, nor all happiness a dream.

Lady G. (breaks into a wild cry of rapture and beats the air with her hands). No, I can't bear this ; my heart will burst ! A dream ? . . . Eugene, where are you ? The room is dark, and only your face shows in a pale light. . . . I can't hear your voice. . . . Which is true, your love or my loneliness ?

Eugene (leans over her. He has taken up the roses and lays them about her face on the pillow). We shall learn perhaps yonder. You and I are dead, and the June roses blossom on the grave.

[*He kisses her. LADY G. screams and falls back on the pillow. A loud knocking sounds at the street door below.*

LADY G. wakes up panting and looks about. The fire has burnt hollow, and the rumbling of carriages in the street increases. The knocking at the door is just ending.

Lady G. (whispers). Eugene! (A pause.) Eugene! . . . My God! I dreamt it.

[Goes hurriedly to the bell. As she does so, and stands trembling and haggard, the door opens and a footman comes in, turns on the clusters of electric light and announces: Footman. Mr. Eugene Sinclair.

Lady G. Bring tea at once.

[MR. EUGENE SINCLAIR walks down the room with a firm, heavy tread, the least bit hurried. Taking her hand, he presses it gently and long.

Eugene. Griselda! I may call you by the old name? You have given me so much pleasure in allowing me to come.

Lady G. (tries to smile). You exercise the right of many years of friendship.

Eugene (eagerly). I am so glad you speak at once and frankly. It shows me that we are friends, and that I and my young misdeeds are forgiven.

Lady G. (with forced lightness). The past buries itself, Eugene. I—

[The footman coming in with a tray stumbles against the jamb of the door and all the tea-things rattle. LADY G. looks gratefully in his direction. Whilst tea is being set, EUGENE sits down, puts his smart tan-coloured gloves inside his hat and places that with deliberation on a table at his elbow. LADY G., in a low chair by the fire, glances up at him from the tea-table. He is a tall, portly man, with a handsome, solid face, and hair thinning on the forehead; well groomed, but almost too carefully dressed.

Lady G. (makes a bewildered attempt to smile at him). I suppose I may ask all sorts of questions about your doings—(gradually recovering her aplomb)—since you have been so sweet and so amiable as to remember us. Do you paint still? Of course not, or we should hear of your work, certainly.

Eugene (with a gratified smile). No; I've rather given up the arts—except when we take a holiday in Italy or the East; then one becomes inspired, you know. I've been in New York City for many years, in business, and have always been particularly fortunate. In fact, my home is in the States now.

Lady G. (becomes aware that her visitor has a slight American accent, and turns a shudder into a movement of settling back in her chair). Yes?

Eugene. I married out there, you know. (*Looks down meditating at his boots, which are beautifully polished*) I should like you to know my wife. She's a magnificent woman (*looks up with an arch smile*); so little in your style that one may safely say that, you know.

Lady G. (*repressing another tendency to shudder*). Yes?

Eugene (*leans forward confidentially with his elbows on his knees*). She is what you would call an eminently successful woman—a woman of business. Everything she undertakes succeeds, and she won't accept failure. Went into business before I married her and made a pile; but she had got tired of money when I met her and was studying Art, and (*with a 'young' smile and turn of the head*) that's how it happened, you see.

Lady G. (*seeking for an inspiration*). Yes? So interesting; do go on! Does your wife exhibit in New York?

Eugene (*volubly*). Oh, no; she only paints for her friends. And really, considering the want of training, her work is wonderful. All the doors of our house over there are decorated—very handsome. But this winter she is very much taken up by the new house. We are settling in England for a year or two, for Emily says she's tired of money-grubbing over the other side, and wants me to look up all old friends. But I'm boring you?

Lady G. (*with a mechanically brilliant smile*). No! And you thought of me among others. My dear Eugene, that was friendly of you!

Eugene (*leaning forward and taking the cup that LADY G. offers him*). It's all Emily's doing. That woman's observation is colossal! She insisted that I should come and see you among the first. I was doubtful, for I remember I treated you very, very shabbily in the young foolish days.

Lady G. Please, Eugene. It's all buried and done with.

Eugene (*heartily*). Of course! That's just what Emily said. 'It's all buried, that old fad of yours,' she said, 'and you may be sure the Lady Griselda will like to have you call.'

Lady G. (*with some hauteur*). Mrs. Sinclair knows her sex.

Eugene. Down to the ground! Thanks, a little cream. May I say how I admire your frock? From Paris, I suppose?

Lady G. (*flushing*). It is my own design.

Eugene. Is it possible?

Lady G. I used to make your models' dresses again and again, when you were in difficulty over them.

Eugene. Those, yes; but that was another thing.

Lady G. (with some irritation). Do you mean that an idle woman's dress is more important than the costumes used by an artist in his work? You are changed!

Eugene (smiling stolidly). Well, I've got into a different groove, that's all. You don't owe me a grudge for it?

Lady G. (upsets a teacup with her nervous fingers, and gives a short laugh as she looks up at him). Perhaps I owe you a slight grudge for—(she stops)—for giving up working, shall we say?

Eugene (vaguely). Oh, I work, of course. A man would be bored if he did nothing all the time. But, frankly, Emily is such a splendid woman of business that she quite spoils one—leaves one nothing to do. Fact! (Puts down his cup.) I have so much to say that you positively must not let me stay and bore you . . . You can't think what a treat it is to a man like me to come out of the crowd into this haven of rest. (Looks round the room with sentiment.) One goes out strengthened, refreshed, and ready for the world's work again.

[He rises and walks about the room with an air finely suggestive of shipwreck.

Lady G. (with her eyes fixed on the sofa, repeats mechanically). Strengthened . . . refreshed . . . (To him.) Ah, well, Eugene, I don't think the world has worn you much, or used you ill. You look splendidly—confident and prosperous.

Eugene (rising and taking her hand). And you look—wonderful! And now I have a parting favour to ask—not too much between old friends, I hope. Emily longs to make your acquaintance; she has a little gathering on Friday, and as the time is too short for preliminaries, she begs that you will kindly waive ceremony and come to us.

Lady G. (meekly). Mrs. Sinclair is too kind. Will you let me look in my engagement book?

[Goes to her writing-table and turns the leaves of a purple-bound book without reading.

Eugene (standing at the fire, goes on talking to her over his shoulder). It's really our house-warming, and Emily is very anxious to make things go off. (Laughs good-humouredly.) The dear woman is bitten by the recitation craze, and is getting up some very taking things in plantation dialect.

Lady G. (over the writing-table, murmurs below her breath). You and I are dead . . . the June roses . . .

Eugene (continuing). Don't say you can't come. For us, you

know, you can throw over someone else. Clapham is not a long drive.

Lady G. (with closed eyes). Ah, Clapham! (*Shuts the book desperately and walks back to the tea-table, where EUGENE stands, having gathered hat and gloves in his hand.*) Yes; tell your wife I'll come. As you say, we can dispense with the ceremonies of introduction. And many thanks, of course, and wishes for a happy and useful New Year.

Eugene. Thanks so very much. I may? (*Kisses her hands, first one, then the other. LADY G. flushes angrily, and standing in the light of the pink-shaded lamp looks very striking and handsome. EUGENE looks at her closely with a certain appreciation that makes her flush deeper.*) What a fool I was, Grissel, after all!

Lady G. (simply). I expect you were wise, without meaning to be, Eugene.

Eugene. A mere fool, my dear. (*He gives her the conqueror's look.*) If you were a bad woman, Grissel, and cared . . . you could make a fool of me yet!

Lady G. (very coldly, with lowered eyes). I am not that sort of a woman, at least.

Eugene (in a different tone). Nor I that sort of a man, I hope. Now—we expect you Friday. This is so delightful, Grissel! One more favour—is it granted before asked?

[*He takes her hands again.*

Lady G. (hurriedly). Yes, yes!

Eugene. I claim this en artiste. You shall wear the famous sapphires that have graced the Fairweather ladies for so long. Emily too has set her heart on having them. She has the true American sentiment about these wonderful heirlooms that you set so little store by.

Lady G. (hysterically laughing). Wouldn't the sapphires in a glass case content your American friends' curiosity without me?

Eugene (gently patting her hand). Now, now, Grissel! I can't have you say naughty things to an old friend! Come and look half as beautiful as you do this evening (*places a light kiss on the middle of her forehead*), and charm the heart out of young America.

Lady G. (with heroism). I'll come!

Eugene. May I have one of your roses? (*Takes one from the bowl.*) Wonderful how modern science turns winter into summer—Poetic . . . and with our hearts always young . . . eh, Grissel? Good-bye!

Lady G. Good-bye!

Eugene (at the door). A thousand, thousand thanks !

[*He gives her another look as he passes through the portière.*

LADY G. looks straight in front of her with a mechanical smile. EUGENE goes. LADY G. bends over the bowl of roses, which are already drooping their frail heads : she passes her fingers tenderly over the petals. Turning to the mantelpiece she leans her forehead against the marble ledge, and looks thoughtfully into the fire. Suddenly her shoulders begin to shake with convulsive sobs, long and laboured.

Lady G. My beautiful, dead love ! Empty, intolerable, barren life !

The door opens, and LADY LUCY COHEN puts her head in inquiringly.

Lady L. May one ? I couldn't help coming back to hear all about it. (Comes down the room.) Why, Grissel ! (LADY G. stands with her forehead against the mantelpiece, gasping and struggling with her sobs.) What has the wretch done this time ? My dear, dear, soft-hearted old thing, do wake up and take things as they come !

Lady G. (raising her head). I'm wide awake now, Lucy ! But my head aches and I'm a little depressed and overcome.

Lady L. You had better tell me all about it, darling.

Lady G. (fretfully). There's nothing to tell . . . He's stupid and sleek and purse-proud (LUCY coughs), and babbled about 'old friends' till I was sickened.

Lady L. Odious animal !

Lady G. He's got a rich American wife who recites——

Lady L. Ah !

Lady G. They live at Clapham !

Lady L. My God !

Lady G. (wearily). He came to ask me to go to a house-warming, and make a show of the sapphires for the benefit of 'young America.'

Lady L. (murmurs). Can such things go unpunished in a civilised country ?

Lady G. (with a hysterical laugh). And fancy, Lucy, I lost my self-possession at that, and asked if the sapphires wouldn't do without me—in a glass case—ha ! ha ! ha !

Lady L. (with a horrified little gasp). Grissel ! You ?

[*There is a pause.*

Lady L. What are you doing ? Burning him in effigy ?

[LADY G. has taken the roses from the bowl in her two hands, and sinking on her knees by the glowing hearth, scatters them carefully on the fire. She watches the smouldering blossoms thoughtfully before speaking.

Lady G. (absently). In the heart of the fire, where they can't decay, or rot, or grow old . . . and the dreams go with them, up into the cold thin air—not lost, but purified . . .

Lady L. I always said that young man was a cad.

Lady G. My head aches.

MAY MORRIS.

Modern Language Teaching.

'THE present defect of English education, from the top of the scale to the bottom, is our neglect of the cultivation of the modern languages of the nations of the world.'

These words from one of Sir William Harcourt's latest speeches should be taken to heart by all who are interested in the education and progress of our people. Why is it that our progressive country, which in most things leads the vanguard of civilisation, should be so behindhand in speaking and understanding the languages of other nations? In the first place, as has been justly pointed out, the English language is spoken all over the world, and we think we can get on without troubling to learn other languages. In the second place, the greatness of our country makes us self-sufficient. We mind but little what the foreigner says; we treat his criticisms with contempt. We are lacking in sympathy for other nations; we do not try to understand them, and we are the losers by it. Other languages often express shades of thought and feeling which are unrepresented in our own because they hold but little place in our lives, and yet which might with advantage be cultivated. We know, for instance, what comfort is, but do we understand the German *gemüthlichkeit*, which is independent of the luxuries of life? We are not wanting in thoroughness, but is there much of that higher element of *Innigkeit* in the rush of our existences? The presence or absence of a word in a language sometimes marks a characteristic national difference. The words 'home,' *heim*, have no exact equivalent among the nations who lead chiefly an outdoor life. Home sickness and *heimweh* are rendered in French by *le mal du pays*, showing that the native village or locality supersedes the more restricted idea of the house. On the other hand, there is a sentimental ring about the German *Vaterland* and the French *Patrie* which is wanting in the English word 'country.' And as each nation, as Mr. Chamberlain once said, has given the

feeling of patriotism a distinctive national character, the difference may perhaps indicate that British patriotism, intense though it be, is more transcendental and less connected with an exclusive attachment to the native soil. It is a fact that the Englishman, who would die for his country, very frequently prefers living out of it. When not bound by duty he makes his home wherever he finds existence easiest, and he is but little tormented with that nostalgia that makes the Swiss long for his mountains and the Breton for his native village.

There is no language from which expressions might not be quoted that are only approximately translatable, hence the study of each language opens up a fresh horizon, and the '*humani nihil a me alienum puto*' is best realised by the man who knows many tongues.

The chief cause of our ignorance is the method which has been hitherto generally employed for teaching modern languages. They have been taught far too much as if they were dead languages. The teachers have been mostly people who had only a theoretical knowledge of the language, who were unable to speak it, and whose object was that their pupils should satisfy the requirements of the examinations, which are but little in touch with the needs of practical life.

A reaction has now set in, and there is a movement to teach even classical languages in a more vivid and less conventional way. But it takes a long time to overcome prejudices, to leave the beaten track and start on a new line, to re-model the whole teaching of a particular subject; and yet the way to do it is so simple and obvious that the wonder is it has not been tried before.

The general complaint is that the school curricula are crowded with subjects, all of which are more or less important; and the problem is how to give them all their due place and to attain the best results at the least expenditure of time and of strain upon teacher and pupil. It is desirable that the instruction should be so divided over the school years as to meet the powers of learning of a child—that is to say, that particular subjects should be taught at a period in a child's life when its capacities are most ready to assimilate them. This is really the secret of all education, and too much stress cannot be laid on it. At an age when children cannot yet grapple with the difficulties of Latin grammar or grasp the problems of mathematics or physical science, they are not only perfectly fit to learn to speak a modern

language, but the learning of it comes easiest. 'We observe,' says Dr. Jowett, the late Master of Balliol, 'that while the powers of the mind usually strengthen as years advance, at least until the end of middle life, the faculty of learning a new language decays almost in an inverse ratio. The short period of six months is said to be enough to perfect a clever child in a new language; and a child very rarely confuses different languages: if the weight becomes too great for his memory one language drives out the other. They are learned as a whole and forgotten as a whole. Modern languages, then, should be learned in childhood, and they should be learned from native teachers.'

The experience of foreign countries, such as Holland and Hungary, where the oral as well as grammatical knowledge of three or four modern languages is considered essential to a good education, illustrates the theory. The children there are taught to speak them from infancy by natives from the different countries. They learn them without effort while at play. The Swiss, French, or English nursery governess forms part of almost every well-to-do household and foreign languages are rightly made the starting-point of education. In England the number of parents who give their children these advantages are comparatively few, because they do not see how important would be the results for their children in after years. Until we can rouse their interest in the matter our schools must do the best they can to supply the deficiency. We must try and convince the heads of schools of the urgent need there is to begin to teach a foreign language in the preparatory departments. There is nothing so difficult as to get people out of a certain groove of ideas. It is astonishing, but it is a fact, that there still lingers among a certain number of teachers an actual prejudice against beginning education with a foreign language. If teachers would only realise that if children were accustomed to hear idiomatic French spoken from the Kindergarten upwards it would facilitate the whole school course afterwards, that it would put an end to, or at any rate minimise, the language grinding for examinations, there is no doubt that every one of them would fall in with our views. But the system is not believed in because it has never been seriously tried. It is true that in a certain number of schools French is taught in the Kindergarten, but the lessons are too short and far between, and the children only learn a certain number of words. To derive any real benefit from the teaching the children should be taught from the first orally every day, and it would be best if French

could be for a great part of the time the medium of Kindergarten teaching. But here we are met with a difficulty. From inquiries I have made I find that the Froebel method is not followed in France; that it is not recognised by the French State; that there are no normal schools where future Kindergarten teachers can be trained, but that some imperfect Kindergarten teaching goes on in private schools. It seems to me, however, that intelligent French teachers could easily master the method, especially if they were acquainted with the Gouin method, which proceeds on the same lines, namely, by gradual development. Games and nursery rhymes would soon make the foreign language popular among children, and we know how keen children are about anything they take a fancy to. In fact, a head-mistress gave me an instance of the pleasure children take in learning a new language. A mother had told her that her little girl was teaching the baby French phrases, and she had heard of a father and mother being much amused by being taught French early in the morning by a Kindergarten child. The reason I lay stress on French is that, though we may not all agree with the dictum of the poet Bornier, '*Chacun a deux pays, le sien et puis la France*', there is yet a universal consensus of opinion that French should be the first foreign language taught, and it certainly has on every ground the best claim.

The teaching of oral French in the Kindergarten will not only prove an inestimable advantage to our girls, but it may help our boys, whose education in modern languages has been hitherto so lamentably deficient. At a meeting of the Modern Language Association some time ago, Sir John Lubbock pointed out that, in a country like England, which has commercial relations all over the world, the knowledge of foreign languages is of the greatest use to young men in business, and how they were often hampered without it. Sir William Harcourt showed, in the speech already quoted, that we suffer from the competition of other nations, not because our goods are not the best that can be made, but because we have not a sufficient number of agents who are familiar with the languages of the different countries to send out in order to push the trade as Germany and other nations do.

Not long ago a military man, who spoke with the experience of 'an old soldier who has taken special interest in the education and training of our young officers,' strongly urged, in the *Times*, the necessity of the study of modern languages, the knowledge of which, he said, was all important for the military profession; and

it is superfluous to add that, for a diplomatic and political career, such knowledge is simply indispensable.

Therefore, if in the Kindergarten boys were given a first start, at least in French, it would be conferring a benefit on them also. In schools where there is no Kindergarten, as much time as possible should be given to French in the preparatory department or the first form—an hour at least every day—and the teaching should be given exclusively in French and, if possible, by natives. I have heard it remarked that foreign languages should be taught at first chiefly by English teachers, while at a later stage natives from the country might be useful. I venture wholly to dissent from this, and should like to reverse it. To quote Jowett once more, 'The true and living voice of a language, the expression, the intonation, the manner, the inspiration of it, can only be communicated by a teacher to whom it is native and inherited.' All the early teaching of French and German should therefore be given, wherever it is possible, by natives. Having once acquired a good pronunciation, children are likely to retain it. They would learn it with difficulty at a later stage, if they had been taught with a British accent in the beginning. Far be it from me to disparage the teaching of those English masters or mistresses who have studied French in France, and who have a thorough command of the language, but, as a general rule, we will all admit that, if we aim at a pure accent, we must acquire it first hand. I cannot illustrate better what I mean than by quoting what a French woman said to me once, when she was giving elocution lessons here: 'I have been fifteen times in England, and yet you will be surprised to hear that I do not know English—but I have not learnt it in order not to lose my French.' That shows what delicate tests French people themselves bring to bear on their knowledge of their mother tongue. This does not apply with equal severity to German, a somewhat rougher language, which can better resist the wear and tear of foreign contact. That is partly the reason why it is so important to begin French first. The standard of style too is higher in France than in Germany: the essential characteristic of a good French style being its conciseness and lucidity, while long involved sentences are unfortunately somewhat characteristic of German erudition. Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff tells us in his Diary that 'Mommsen called Renan a true savant, *in spite of his beautiful style.*'

The introduction of the Gouin method has done excellent service by drawing attention to the fact that modern languages can

only be learned well by oral practice. The so-called dead, or classical, languages are taught for literary and archaeological purposes, but the essence of living language teaching is to enable pupils to express themselves fluently in them, both in speaking and writing, and the Gouin system aims at this. It is based on the natural process by which every infant begins to speak—that is, by learning the sounds through the ear before it knows how to read and write—and it makes the verb the pivot of the teaching. The child is taught to describe in accurate words and in their natural sequence the actions and events of every day life that are within its sphere of comprehension. Besides giving him a correct vocabulary, instead of the slipshod one that children and even grown up people too often use, it puts order into his thoughts by making him learn a series of connected sentences, instead of the desultory, unconnected and unmeaning ones of the old exercises. It has, however, its drawbacks: one being that, if taught pure and simple throughout the school course, it would not satisfy the requirements of the examinations. It is therefore best adapted to teaching the lower forms. Another objection is that it is often a strain on the teachers, and I believe that in some schools it was given up on that account. The method seems a first rate tool in the hands of those who have a perfect mastery over it, and who handle it freely, but those to whom it does not appeal and who teach it mechanically, without putting any life of their own in it, will fail to obtain satisfactory results. The children will learn a certain number of phrases like parrots without acquiring any power of expression. It requires therefore intelligent teachers, who have a certain amount of originality and imagination, and who do not consider themselves tied to the series lessons of Mr. Gouin, but are capable of framing new ones to suit the circumstances, so that the method should retain its freshness and vitality, and that the interest of the pupils should not flag.

It has been effectually combined with drawing and brushwork, which gives it an additional interest, and it may be adapted to the elementary teaching of almost any subject, but this implies that the teacher should have a great deal of general and accurate knowledge.

By suiting the action to the word, children learn to associate the words with the objects and ideas and not with English words—the only way by which they will be taught to think in the new language. Therefore translations and exercises are condemned by the new method for beginners at all ages, and a complete eman-

cipation from the mother tongue is required. At a later stage translating from one language into another will be learnt with all the more ease.

A head master at the Hague, who has introduced the system with excellent results, both for French and German, into his school, said to me when I visited it last year : 'It does not matter so much by what method you teach, as long as you speak the language with the pupils.' That is the crucial point. 'To speak the language that is taught,' says Professor Bierbaum, 'is as essential a part of the school teaching as practising the piano is of the music lesson, or doing gymnastics of the drilling lesson.'

I have heard it stated by teachers that though French lessons are begun orally in the lower forms, it is necessary on account of the examinations to resort later on to the old methods of using English as the medium of teaching, but 'that the interest when a language is learnt according to the new methods is doubled, and that there is undoubtedly a greater facility in grappling with the difficulties of composition when first attempted through the previous conversational practice.' My comment on this would be, in the first place, that if the pupils were made thoroughly familiar with the language from the Kindergarten or the preparatory department upwards—that is, if most of the time at an early stage were given to oral language teaching—it would not be necessary to resort to English afterwards. In the second place, the old methods have proved wanting.

All the trouble taken for the examinations frequently fails for want of that very oral practice which is set aside. While the pupils can answer difficult questions in French grammar, they often do not know how to apply the rules, and have trouble to turn easy sentences into French. No doubt the fault lies partly with the examinations. One of the writers in the French paper *Le Temps* expressed his astonishment some time ago at the questions put by the London University examiner to candidates for a French teacher's certificate. He says that though he prides himself on knowing French well, he would be at a loss to answer them; and he sums up: 'An examination like that of the London University proves nothing. A candidate who can answer all those questions does not yet know French; he only knows the curiosities of the language. He knows all the exceptions without being able to apply the rules.' The Oxford and Cambridge examination papers sometimes err in the same direction, but the examiner's criticisms are on the right tack by giving paramount importance to oral practice.

I cannot help thinking that if we left the examinations more to take care of themselves, and concentrated our whole attention at first on the best way of making a pupil acquire, as a language authority suggests, 'a thorough command of a limited number of words'—those required for the general purposes of life are estimated at two or three thousand—the results even of the examinations would gain. At any rate, we must remember that the examinations are a means, not an end. Those schools which do best in French composition are also those where the teaching is given in French throughout the school course. This fact speaks for itself.

I do not wish it to be supposed for a single moment that I want to discourage the study of grammar. I have heard people boast that they could write French perfectly without knowing the grammar, but I defy anyone to write their past participles correctly without having learnt the rules. At first only the simplest rules should be taught, not in an abstract way, but as they arise in connection with the oral exercises. In that way the grammar will be far more instructive and attractive than if taught as dry matter by itself.

Archbishop Whately gives some excellent advice with regard to the learning of grammar which I should like to quote: 'Take care of the easy things,' he says, 'and the hard ones will take care of themselves; or treat the easy parts as if they were hard, and the hard parts will become easy. I have formerly remarked, I believe, that the way to make out a difficulty is not to puzzle at it, but to familiarise yourself with those parts which you do understand till they gradually throw light on the more obscure. This is particularly evident in the learning of languages. If men could but be persuaded to read easy books with very great care and attention, they would acquire such a knowledge of the language as they might apply with the greatest advantage when they came to harder ones; but unfortunately they generally will be satisfied with making out (or fancying they make out) the meaning; and when they can do this with ease, they are for proceeding to a harder book; and when they are stopped by its difficulties, they have to learn and apply at once those rules which they should have been already familiar with. My rule will apply also very well to the right method of learning grammar.' This advice of the archbishop's completely agrees with one of the fundamental principles of the new method—that of graduated teaching.

It is interesting to see how everywhere attempts are made to

get rid of the old methods. Professor Vietor, at Marburg, one of the promoters of the Neuphilologen-verein, informs me that though the Gouin method is not followed in German public schools, yet language teaching is undergoing a reform which is recognised by the Prussian Code, and that reading and speaking have now precedence over grammar and written exercises. The same principles have been adopted by the Association Phonétique, which promotes the improvement of language teaching in France as the Neuphilologen-verein does in Germany.

When foreign languages can be acquired by such simple methods as those that have been suggested, it would seem that the plan of teaching beginners by means of a phonetic alphabet, which is now exercising the minds of some, is nothing but a delusion and a snare. Many sounds in one language cannot be adequately rendered in another, and cannot therefore be represented by common signs. As for writing phonetically, we all know that we learn spelling mechanically, and sometimes when we think of the spelling of a word we are apt to spell it wrong, even though we usually spell it right. To learn, therefore, first the phonetic and afterwards the correct orthography must add to the difficulties and complications of language learning and teaching, and take time and trouble which might well be bestowed on other subjects.

The study of phonetics is as yet only in its infancy, and to the student of philology it is no doubt of great importance. It may be of use also to the teacher, for he may thereby acquire a more subtle perception, a more delicately attuned ear to detect faults of pronunciation which are now frequently passed over. The study should, however, be limited to the specialist, who should give the benefit of his acquirements to the pupils without embarrassing them with phonetic alphabets, which will only waste their time and confuse them in the end.

With regard to the sequence in which foreign languages should be taught, some good language authorities agree that Latin might be taken with advantage before German, because an acquaintance with Latin must necessarily facilitate the study of German syntax, but that it is all the same desirable to begin German early, as 'those who have begun later never gain the same security as to grammar in writing or speaking unless they spend longer in the country than most can do.' I gather that pupils learn German more easily than French, and it seems the greater pity that in some schools Latin and German should be alternative subjects, as German is indispensable for archaeology and other sciences, not to speak of its literature and of its educational value in developing

those qualities of the mind which are apt to get stifled in our matter of fact atmosphere. The study of that great teacher of mankind, Goethe, is alone worth learning German for. 'The German language,' says Carlyle, 'it is presumable thou knowest; if not, shouldst thou undertake the study thereof for that sole end, it were well worth thy while.' To drop one language for another seems in any case undesirable, for it is easy to unlearn and so much time would have been wasted. It is well to remember that the knowledge of a language is as much a means as an end. It is the golden key that opens the treasure house of the life and thought and literature of a people. 'Foreign language teaching,' says Professor Wendt, of Hamburg, 'should emancipate itself from the methods which are chiefly or exclusively directed to the form and do not do justice to the substance.' 'The philologist should study all the expressions of life and the political evolution of the foreign nation; and having assimilated them in a systematic and scientific way, he should interpret them to his pupils. To the science of language no branch of the foreign national existence should be indifferent.' This applies to university teaching, but may it not on a smaller scale be carried out in our secondary schools? The ideal plan would be, as a head mistress suggests, 'if a sufficient knowledge of a language could be acquired, to allow the mistress to teach the geography, history, literature, of France and Germany in their own language.' And if the history and literature of the same period could be taken in conjunction this would give a broader view of both and make the pupils remember them better. Of course a native of the country could best carry out such a plan. When the pupils have mastered the language sufficiently to understand and appreciate what they read, they should be introduced to the masterpieces of literature; but if these are used as vehicles for learning the language, they too often leave tedious recollections on the mind, instead of creating, as they should, a love for the authors. Tennyson complained that he had had Horace so thoroughly drummed into him that he disliked him in proportion. He would lament, 'They use me as a lesson book at school and they will call me that horrible Tennyson. It was not till many years after boyhood that I could like Horace. Byron expressed what I felt, "Then farewell Horace whom I hated so." Indeed I was so overdosed with Horace that I hardly do him justice even now that I am old.' The selection of books for reading should, according to the new method, be made on a systematic principle. 'The books selected for school reading,' says Professor Müller of Heidelberg, 'must serve especially to give the pupils an appreciation of the superior intel-

lects of the nation by making them acquainted with the best and noblest which the people have produced in literature and art, handicraft and industry, and with their most important achievements in peace and in war, in politics and in social life, as far as the exposition of these facts does not surpass the intelligence of the scholar or is not out of place for school treatment.' Learning masterpieces of poetry by heart is laying up an invaluable treasure for after years.

It were much to be wished for the sake of women and men both that the status of modern languages at the Universities could be raised. In Germany the Neuphilologen-verein is making great efforts to improve it by encouraging training in the new methods, prolonged visits by teachers to foreign countries, and *viva voce* examinations. In England the Modern Language Association is working in the same direction. It seems an anomaly that honours can be obtained in modern languages at Oxford without a *viva voce* test, and that for the Cambridge tripos *viva voce* also is optional and that the results do not affect the class. Moreover, the examination for honours in modern languages at Oxford is for women only, and I am told on good authority that unless this is changed the opening of the degree to women would discourage the study of modern languages among them, especially that of German. Those who consider the knowledge of modern languages a necessary part of a good education should combine to put pressure on the University authorities to get this state of things altered.

No one can look at the map of our great empire without feeling how important it is that we should be in close touch, morally as well as materially, with the nations of the world, and that we should defeat envy and distrust by large and generous sympathies. It is not too much to say that this can best be brought about by the study of modern languages.

'We should like,' as Professor Wendt says, 'to arouse in the young the appreciation of other civilised nations and imbue them with a love of the foreign language, as the chief reflexion of the foreign character; the better, the more lastingly, the more systematically and scientifically we initiate them into the understanding of foreign conditions, the more we shall foster the love of home, the more we shall make them value by comparison the inalienable treasure they possess in their own country, while we shall preserve them at the same time from chauvinism and jingoism, the caricatures of true patriotism.'

ELISABETH LECKY.

A Tsar and a Bear.

HIS MAJESTY had listened with some interest to Von Holstein's description of how he had—under the auspices of the Imperial huntsman, Arnheim—laid siege to the hibernating den of a big bear and—again with the help of the huntsman, though Von Holstein did not dwell on this point—had succeeded in slaying the brute.

'What—they make a house, as it were, for the winter, and shut themselves up there?' said the Tsar incredulously.

'Exactly so, Majesty,' said Holstein; 'a very convenient arrangement for the sportsman.'

'But stop—what do they do—how do they live? They must eat, I suppose, in winter as in summer?'

'They sleep, Majesty, and their stomachs rest, no doubt.'

'Come, come, Holstein,' said Paul; 'I wish to know how you killed this bear. Speak seriously, for I am serious.'

'Pardon me, your Majesty, I am very serious,' protested the Prussian *attaché*. 'It is a marvellous dispensation of Nature, ordained for the comfort of bears, that these brutes require no food during the winter season, but sleep during the whole period, existing upon their own fat.'

'Well then, what? You found this den—'

'Arnheim's men knew of it,' said the *attaché*, 'and I—'

'And you attacked the bear in his den and killed him—devil take it, I see there is danger in the sport!'

'Very little, your Majesty; the beast is too sleepy to be fierce, unless it happen to be a female with newly-born cubs. Well, then, the men and the dogs laid siege to the den and drove the animal out, as I say. Well, there stood I, with Arnheim at my side holding a second gun and also a bear-spear. The bear was not a fierce one, though large. He did not attack us; on the contrary, he endeavoured to make off through the forest. I shot —*batz!* I shot again—*batz!* At the second explosion down

fell the bear and rolled over. Arnheim handed me both guns. "Load them quickly," he shouted, "while I keep him fighting!" and with that he sprang after the bear with his spear.

"By St. Nicholas!" ejaculated the Tsar, "Arnheim is a brave man. I will remember it! Well, and then?"

"Then I quickly loaded the guns and went close to Arnheim, who fought with the bear. Arnheim's spear was well stuck into the bear's stomach, and the bear stood and pushed at one end of it and Arnheim at the other. By the saints, it was a sight for your Majesty himself! "Shoot," cried Arnheim, "and don't miss, lordship, for this one's too heavy for me!" I shot, putting the nose of my gun close to the brute's ear and fired. He gave a terrible roar, and pushed like a thousand furies at the spear, and in an instant both he and Arnheim were rolling together in the snow, but Arnheim beneath."

"Lord have mercy upon us!" muttered the Tsar, crossing himself. "Well—Arnheim is dead, no doubt? And how did you escape? You ran faster than the wounded bear, I doubt not."

"There was no need, Majesty; it was the bear that was dead, and Arnheim unhurt."

The Tsar crossed himself a second time.

"And you tell me there is little danger in it!" he said reproachfully.

"I protest, Majesty, by your favour, I was never in danger."

"Devil take it, Holstein, I think I will shoot a bear myself. I have nerve, I tell you—unusual nerve and courage! Yes, devil take it, I will shoot a bear—that is, if you will accompany me. Arnheim shall come also, of course. What say you, shall we kill a bear together?"

"It is a justifiable risk for me, Majesty, who am insignificant; but for your Majesty the question is different. I would not have it said that I was a party to any enterprise which endangered your sacred person."

"No, no, I am determined. I will shoot a bear. You shall accompany me. See here, we will take two good men, and each shall hold two guns besides our own, for it seems to me there should be no reloading at the critical moment. Be here tomorrow at nine, Holstein, and we shall shoot a bear together. Now send me Arnheim."

Von Holstein was quite pleased to accompany the Tsar upon a second bear-hunting expedition, because there was just the chance of glory, while—since his Majesty would pay all expenses

—the economy of the day's sport was assured. He, therefore, retired in right good humour, and sent Arnheim to the Tsar, as requested.

‘Arnheim,’ he said, ‘his Majesty wishes to shoot a bear. Go to him at once and make arrangements.’

‘Good Lord!’ ejaculated Arnheim. ‘But the Tsar has never pulled a trigger in his life.’

‘Never mind, Arnheim,’ said the diplomat, ‘go to his Majesty. We'll pull the triggers; and, who knows, we may save the Tsar, in which case we shall be decorated.’

So Arnheim went to receive his orders, which were that his Majesty would go shoot a bear at nine next morning. It must not be a she-bear with cubs, explained the Tsar, because he was informed that these are very dangerous. Moreover, Arnheim must find his bear close to the Palace, because the Tsar desired to be back at twelve.

‘Twelve on the following day? That will be difficult, Majesty,’ exclaimed Arnheim. ‘Bears do not——’

‘Twelve the same day, fool,’ said the Tsar.

‘But, Majesty, where am I to find a bear so close at hand that it can be reached and shot within a couple of hours? The bears haunt wild, distant places——’

‘Fool!’ said the Tsar, growing angry; ‘I tell you there is a parade of the Guards at twelve. I will shoot this bear and be back in time for the parade.’

‘But, Majesty——’

‘Go, fool, and find the bear. See that all is ready for a start at nine. Do not force me to drive farther than is absolutely necessary; and mind, no she-bears with cubs!’

Five minutes later Arnheim appeared before Von Holstein. The huntsman was in tears, and declared that he was lost; he was a dead man; he was off to Siberia!

‘Why? What's the matter?’ asked Holstein.

Arnheim explained that the Tsar required a ready-made bear in a den—a quiet one, warranted to show no resistance when attacked—by nine in the morning.

‘Well, man alive, ride round the nearest villages and inquire whether some peasant doesn't know of a *berloga* (den). You still have six or seven hours of the day, and then there's the night.’

‘The Tsar must have his bear if he has said it!’ wailed poor Arnheim. ‘This means Siberia, I know.’

Von Holstein bade the fellow play the man; there was no

need to talk of Siberia until he had exhausted every resource in his search for a bear. But at seven in the evening Arnheim rang up the young diplomat once more, and, looking a mere wreck of his usually sturdy and genial self, declared that there was not a bear known of within a radius of five miles. What on earth was he to do? Take poison, or dive under the ice of the Neva?

'Neither,' said Von Holstein. 'I've thought of a plan. There's a little risk in it, but that is better than disobeying the Tsar, who, as all the world knows, is insane upon the question of absolute obedience.'

'For Heaven's sake, lordship, let me know what to do quickly!' implored Arnheim.

'Well, the Tsar would have a bear, and a bear he shall have. There are plenty in the town.'

'In the town!' ejaculated Arnheim. 'You mock me, lordship. Bears do not live in towns.'

'Nonsense, man, they do. I saw one this morning—a fine one, too. All you have to do is to discover him, buy him up, pop him into a *berloga* somewhere just outside the town, summon the Tsar, and there you are!'

Arnheim skipped for joy.

'A dancing bear!' he cried. 'I never thought of it. The idea is splendid. The Tsar is no sportsman, he will never know the difference!' Then the man fell on his knees and kissed Holstein's feet. 'My pigeon, my grandfather and protector! May all the saints bless and love you,' he cried, 'for you have saved me!'

'Go away, you old fool, and find your bear,' said Holstein, laughing; 'then come back and I'll help you to fit him with a den.'

It was nine at night when Arnheim returned. He was haggard and worn, but radiant.

'All is well,' he murmured. 'I have the wild beast, lordship. He and his master are on the road to Ruchee. There is a little wood only a mile from the Samson Bridge; I propose to make the *berloga* there.'

'Good!' said Holstein. 'The nearer the better.'

The two sportsmen overtook the bear and his master by the river side near the Samson Bridge. He was a fine large bear, and he whined and moaned as he went along, for he was very hungry.

'I wouldn't have him fed at his usual time,' explained

Arnheim, 'because he must eat a large meal in the lair and fall asleep there, otherwise he might not remain.'

'Good again!' said Holstein. 'You are a genius, Arnheim.'

The wood, scarcely half a mile from the outskirts of the town, suited admirably. In the middle of it was a spot in which two or three trees had fallen over one another. Here Arnheim deftly dug out of the snow a large hole, roofed by the chaos of broken branches, and backed by the uprooted trunk of one of the pines—just such a spot as a bear would choose for his winter house. Into this den a huge supply of food was placed ready for Bruin's use; the snow was carefully piled and hardened at the sides, and the *berloga* was ready. It wore, naturally, an amateurish appearance, but it would do very well for the Tsar, and probably the bear, being from his early youth unused to the real article, would put up with it gladly enough.

'Stop, we must have the chain off,' said Holstein. 'Did you think of bringing a file, Arnheim?'

Arnheim had a file, but though the bear was glad enough to have the chain removed, he absolutely refused to allow even his master to file away the ring at his nose, growing very angry and savage over the matter—so much so, indeed, that it was judged advisable to desist for the present.

'I can do anything with him when he's full,' explained Ivan, his keeper; 'but he's apt to be savage when his stomach's empty!'

So the bear was fed, entering promptly and kindly into the wishes of those present by climbing straightway into the *berloga*, and starting, with a grunt of incredulous joy, to demolish the provisions as though he had not seen food for a week.

'Stay with him, Ivan,' said Arnheim, 'and use the file when he is in a good temper. Better not leave the place in case he should feel dull without you, since he is accustomed to your society. We shall be here at ten to-morrow; if all is well then, you shall have your money down.'

'Good,' said Ivan; and the two others departed, well pleased with their work, as they had some right to be.

In the morning, soon after nine, the Tsar, having ascertained that the bear's den had been found and all arrangements made, and having assured himself, further, that the animal was a single gentleman, or possibly a single lady—but, at any rate, not a married lady with a family—started upon his sporting enterprise, determined but somewhat nervous, desiring to show himself as

mighty a hunter as Von Holstein, yet anxious to avoid every danger which is the heritage of the hunter.

Arnheim was shocked and alarmed to find, on arrival at the *berloga*, that though Ivan, the bear-keeper, was present, he was very drunk; so much so, that it was impossible to get any sort of conversation out of him. Ivan had seized the opportunity of their absence during the night to spend that interval in more congenial society and in more comfortable quarters than with the bear in his den. He had slept at the village beer-house, at Liésnoy, where he had drowned his natural sorrow for the imminent fate of his old friend and companion in liberal liquid consolations.

With the Tsar stood Arnheim and Von Holstein, each holding two extra guns—single-barrels, of course, and of a type in use just one hundred years ago, for the Emperor was Paul, father of Nicholas I., and the date about 1800. Two other men stood by with bear-spears—wicked-looking weapons of stout ash, with double-edged steel blades of a murderous sharpness and thickness. His Majesty's dispositions for his Majesty's safety were complete. There were even a couple of horses tethered to two trees close by, in case of accidents; the Tsar having explained that he desired horses in order that the bear might be followed up quickly should he escape; though there were those who believed that his Majesty intended the animals for another purpose.

Ivan, the bear-keeper, remained close to the lair, armed only with the stick with which he was accustomed to dominate his dancing friend.

'Who is that man?' asked the Tsar; 'and why does he stand so near the *berloga* and grin in that foolish manner? Is he drunk?'

'He is the peasant who found the *berloga*,' explained Arnheim. 'It will be his duty to start the bear when your Majesty is ready. It is a dangerous duty, and he is, no doubt, a little drunk. It is often necessary in big game shooting to produce artificial courage in those who occupy dangerous positions.'

'Good,' said the Tsar; 'he is a brave man. Stay—I, too, will take a glass of vodka! Now,' he continued, having refreshed the inner Tsar, 'I am ready. Stand prepared, you two, Arnheim and Von Holstein. Stay; are you certain this is a single bear, and not a she-bear with cubs? I—I must remember my responsibility to the State. It is useless to run needless risks!'

'Ivan is certain,' said Holstein. 'He actually saw the creature enter the den——'

'Yes, but it may have given birth to cubs since then,' said Paul, looking very pale and anxious. 'Here, you Ivan,' he continued, 'are you sure this is a male bear, and not a dam with cubs?'

Ivan smiled inanely but very pleasantly:

'Why, bless you,' he said, 'I ought to know! Only last night I——'

'He verified it last night,' interrupted Holstein, with great presence of mind, 'through a hole which he pierced in the snow wall of the den. There are no cubs, your Majesty can be perfectly satisfied as to this question; but if you are of opinion that any enterprise carrying risk is undesirable for the Head of the State—in which opinion I should cordially agree—let your Majesty stand aside and watch the hunt. I——'

'No, no; so long as this is no devil of a she-bear with cubs I care nothing. Let Ivan start the bear. Stand ready, Arnheim, and you others. Start him, Ivan.'

The Tsar planted his feet bravely and held his gun firmly; he crossed himself with his left hand and muttered a prayer.

Then Ivan lifted up his voice and roared at the bear, using the usual endearing words in which he was accustomed to address the animal when inviting him to dance.

There came a moaning and a groaning from within, for as a matter of fact the poor old gentleman, comfortably ensconced in the den, was lying full of food, intensely happy, altogether disinclined for dancing or any other foolishness involving movement or exertion.

'Woo-hoop! come out of it, you adjectival son of a passive-participled mother!' roared Ivan lustily, addressing him in his fondest and most familiar terms, 'and show the gentlemen how you can dance! Woo-hoop there! hoola!'

Ivan beat the side of the den with his stick. At the third call, emitting as he came a moan of profound, unspeakable anguish, out rushed poor Bruin, and, obedient to his training and to the voice of his master, rose upon his hind legs and commenced to dance around Ivan in the pathetically ludicrous manner of his tribe. To the horror of Arnheim and Holstein they perceived that he still wore the ring in his snout!

'Holy Virgin!' cried the excited Tsar, 'what is he doing? The man will be killed! This must be a she-bear with cubs

Stand aside, Arnheim, I will shoot. I——have the horses ready there !'

The Tsar fired his gun and missed. Arnheim pushed another into his hand. By some concatenation of chances, all tending most unfortunately for that bear, the Emperor's second bullet flew straight. Down fell Bruin, dead or dying.

Then drunken Ivan fell also over the body of his beloved companion, and wailed and howled aloud, crying out, with many Russian adornments of speech, that his dear friend and the source of his very living had been taken from him to make sport for kings.

'What does the fellow mean?' cried the delighted Tsar.
'Did he not sell us this *berloga*?'

'Certainly, Majesty,' said Arnheim. 'He is drunk, and knows not what he is saying!'

'Then pay him and take him away,' said the Tsar, and Ivan was led blubbering from the field.

Meanwhile Arnheim plied the file upon the nose-ring, and was able to remove this before the Tsar had done with Ivan. But Paul, examining the bear, presently noticed the score in Bruin's nostrils, and inquired what the mark meant. Arnheim had no reply ready just then, and looked desperately at Holstein. The diplomat rose to the emergency.

'That must have been your Majesty's first shot,' he explained.
'I thought you could scarcely have missed, judging from the accuracy of your second attempt.'

Paul had never been seen in so amiable a frame of mind as on that day. He rewarded and decorated all concerned, and the matter would have passed off magnificently had not it unfortunately occurred to his Majesty, a couple of days later, to send for Ivan. He would shoot another bear, he said. Ivan should find him another. He liked the sport. Arnheim made excuses, suggesting other men and places for the next bear; but the Tsar was determined; he would see Ivan.

So Ivan, still very drunk, was ushered into the presence and left alone with his Majesty.

What passed at the interview cannot with accuracy be described, but it is certain that Ivan presently departed with orders to take the huntsman Arnheim for a bear-dance round the town. Ivan was to lead him with a halter round his neck and make him dance at twenty-five principal corners; it is, moreover, an ascertained fact that Von Holstein from this

hour was no longer a *persona grata* at court, and soon left for Berlin.

As for bear-shooting, the Tsar gave it up, discovering that he had no time to devote to the pleasures of sport.

But the bearskin remained to prove to all and sundry that though a Tsar, and unable to devote his time, which belonged to the State, to such pursuits, his Majesty could face the fiercest of wild beasts, if he liked, as bravely as another—ay, and overthrow him with the best.

Moreover, those who had heard rumours of the dancing-bear episode, and desired to verify the matter, were disappointed to find, on examining the Tsar's trophy, that the excellent story was not supported by the facts of the case, for there was not a trace of a ring-mark about the snout.

And the friends of Professor Dubinof, of the Academy of Arts, all agreed that the Tsar was ever ready to reward magnificently the work of those who served him well, for his Majesty decorated that eminent scientist, who superintended the curing and setting up of the bearskin, with the Order of St. Anne of the Second Class.

The skin certainly was beautifully prepared ; and what is still more to the credit of the professor is, that instead of shrinking—as some skins do in the curing—the Tsar's bear had gained at least a foot in length since death.

FRED. WHISHAW.

At the Sign of the Ship.

THAT America should go to war with any European State but her poor 'auld enemy of England' is amazing. We shall not find it easy to escape rebuke for our alleged sentimental sympathies. Spain was our 'auld enemy,' and one would much like to read a Spanish account of our 'Admirals All.' The Iberian view of Drake is probably not that of Mr. Newbolt. I have lurking doubts about the propriety of our Elizabethan proceedings. How Mr. Kingsley hates the Spaniards in *Westward Ho!* how they offend his moral sense! But we were torturing Jesuits while Spain was burning heretics, and one would as lief have fallen into the hands of the Inquisition as of Cecil. Possibly we might have treated Aztecs and Incas better than Cortes and Pizarro did, but our dealings with Africans and Australians hardly tend to certainty on that head. Yet we give ourselves great airs of virtue: it is an Anglo-Saxon habit, and our moral sense, so frequently outraged, is apt to make the cynic smile.

* * *

We have forgotten our old enmity to Spain, and we shall probably be accused of preferring her case. The richer classes will be said to love a Catholic despotism, while the ordinary Briton has a tendency to say 'Go it, the little 'un.' Besides, the Americans are so certain to win that we are in no anxiety about them. What they are doing we should probably do in their circumstances. Conscious of strength, the people want to use it, and, perhaps, they relish excitement and the feeling of 'making history' with a pleasant freedom from anxiety. *Eheu!* would that the Pope could have made peace! And would that, when nations fight, they could abstain from scolding.

'Angry words are angry words,
And that's the moral!'

says Calverley. There was more courtesy between belligerents in earlier ages.

* * *

An Oxford student sends the following reply to my nephew's comments (in April) on a history of England, which he followed to his undoing. The student requests insertion of his response to Mr. Macnab, the cruel schoolmaster.

To the Editor of 'At the Sign of the Ship.'

BRAZENFACE COLLEGE, OXFORD.
April 28, 1898.

DEAR SIR,—As you and your friend McNab have let me in for a bad half-hour with my tutor, I think that you are bound to allow me to ventilate my grievance in your columns. I am one of those members of this University who find that the pressure of social and athletic duties on my time is much too great to allow me to read in detail the dull and lengthy volumes prescribed for the Pass Final Schools. But by the judicious use of the autoschediastic method, and the purveying of 'tips,' lecture notes, and general information, in my own inimitable style, I have generally contrived to slip along without any violent collision with the gentleman who receives my weekly essay.

This term, however, we have begun badly, all owing to pages 550–551 of your 'Ship.' The topic served out to me was William Wallace : now I had been reading a good many of the lighter sort of magazines, and remembered your notes on that worthy, so, instead of bothering myself to get out Green or Bright, who were written twenty years ago, and, no doubt, are obsolete, I proceeded to utilise your friend McNab, whose information, being less than a month old, must be (as I thought) quite up to date. Of course I varied his terminology and rounded off my paragraphs in my best Union diction.

The first statement which roused my tutor out of his usual limp melancholy was the well-turned phrase in which I affirmed that the Highlanders were bitter opponents of Wallace. This was my rendering of your correspondent's elegant 'only a jolly juggins could think that the Highlanders were on the Scottish side in the row. It seems they were not.' It made him open one eye, and mutter something that I could not catch about Stevenson's *Ancient Documents*, Vol. II., and the disturbances in Aberdeenshire and Argyle. But this was only the beginning. When I proceeded to say that there were no Welsh in Strathclyde in 1297, because the Welsh language had been for some time extinct in that region, he woke up thoroughly, and began to be insulting. He asked me whether there were no Cornishmen in Cornwall since old Mrs. Pentreath died in the last century, and suggested that I should deny the title of Irishman to the late Mr. Parnell because he didn't know Erse. Then he asked me whether

the 'British Laws' full of Celtic words were not current in the Western Lowlands till 1298. Next I had constructed a neat little sentence about the absurdity of calling Wallace a 'Strathclyde squire.' I had gathered from McNab that there must be something ludicrous and archaic in the use of the word Strathclyde in the thirteenth century. But he asked me whether it was absurd of Thomas Hardy to call one of his books *Wessex Tales*, and whether there was not a paper published in Norwich called the *East Anglian* something or other. Then I had gone on to state that Wallace had not been crossed by the Sheriff of Lanark, but had cut his throat quite unprovokedly. To this he only remarked that I seemed to know more about 1297 than Fordun, Wintoun and Blind Harry, and asked me who was my authority. I was kind enough to dissemble your name.

After this I had used McNab to the effect that the Steward of Scotland, Sir William Douglas, and Robert Bruce had 'all been tried friends and supporters of Wallace,' which was my rendering of his 'were all in the ruction.' He asked me if I knew that the Steward was with the English army at Stirling, and whether Douglas and Bruce had not betrayed Scotland by swearing fealty to King Edward the moment that Warenne came near them?

Our next skirmish was over my statement that Andrew Murray was killed at Cambuskenneth Bridge. He said that if that was so, it was odd that he should have sent an official letter to the town of Lubeck more than a month after, and a charter of protection to the monks of Hexham five weeks later still.

Lastly I had said, in deference to McNab, that Warenne after the battle of Cambuskenneth didn't withdraw into Stirling. But it seems that someone called Hemingburgh, or Knighton, or something mediæval of that sort, says that he *did* go into Stirling, and left a new Governor there, and saw to the garrisoning of the castle before he proceeded to ride off in haste to Berwick.

I wish you would contrive to keep this Scottish Squeers McNab (he seems to cane his boys every time that he catches them in what he thinks a slip) out of your columns for the future. I haven't put in all my grievances against him, but he is even better at the *suggestio falsi* than at actual misstatements. Anyhow I shall be careful in the future as to utilising the correspondents of the 'Ship' for my essays, and must fall back on my friends' lecture notes.

I am,
Yours somewhat indignantly,
T. SLACKER.

* * *

Mr Slacker's tutor must know, as to the Highlanders, what side was taken by the representatives of the Lordship of the Isles. Bruce, later, brought them round under his friend Angus Og.

As to Welsh in Strathclyde, in 1297, Waleys (Wallace) means 'Welsh,' does it not? and, if the people of Renfrewshire were Welsh, when 'Richard the Welshman,' ancestor of Wallace, came into the country with FitzAlan ('the Steward'), why did they mark out Richard as specially 'Welsh'? 'The Laws of Brets and Scots' were extant, but were they in Welsh? As to Wessex, Mr. Hardy, in the preface to a new edition, remarks that he himself revived 'Wessex,' out of date since the Conquest, he says. The question is whether Strathclyde was any more a current name than Bernicia in the reign of Edward I. As to Wallace's slaying of the Sheriff of Lanarkshire, is there not *Scalacronica*, and contemporary documents in Bain? Macnab never said that the Steward, Bruce, and William Douglas were 'tried adherents' of Wallace. Macnab refers Mr. Slacker to the Chronicle of Lanercost. The noble adherents varied and shifted, but were 'out' in May to July 1297. If Douglas betrayed Scotland, why was he kept in the Tower for life? As to the death of Moray (who was no Earl and no Seneschal, as stated), it rests merely on the finding of a British jury in Bain. But, as I said, I think he must have fallen at Falkirk, not at Stirling, for the reasons given by Mr. Slacker, and the date of the birth of his posthumous child. I do not know what mediæval authority says that Warenne 'withdrew into Stirling.' He may have entered it, but he bolted to Berwick and foundered his horse on the way. Mr. Slacker's tutor can easily find my authority, who mentions the monastery which stabled the steed, sadly 'off his feed,' says the chronicler. *Not to say this*, is at least as much a *suppressio veri* as any remark of Macnab's is a *suggestio falsi*. He is the last man to conceal the fickleness of Bruce, or the temporary lapse of the Bishop of Glasgow, punished by Wallace. But both were 'out.'

* * *

In Macaulay's onslaught on Horace Walpole he mocks that delightful writer for loving miniatures. A miniature of Grammont was more to Horace, says Macaulay, than the American Revolution. One need only dip into the letters to Mann to see how absurd is this remark. Thackeray also speaks of 'Horace Waddlepoodle' and of his collection, as if it were the folly of a fribble. But we prefer Dr. Johnson on miniature art, 'so valuable in diffusing friendship, in reviving tenderness, in awaking the affections of the absent, and continuing the

presence of the dead.' Mr. Foster quotes this beautiful sentence, from I know not which of Johnson's writings, in his delightful new book *British Miniature Painters*.¹ It justifies the taste of our Horace, who did not love the Doctor.

* * *

Miniatures are not only portraits (and on the historical value of portraits Mr. Carlyle has written enough), but they are relics. They have been intimately associated with the dead, carried in the bosom, or worn about the neck. Thus Mr. Foster found, at Belvoir, the miniatures of Raleigh and his son, which had in some way escaped from their enamelled case, with the heart and enlaced initials of Sir Walter and his wife, Elizabeth. Vignettes show the scene in which young Raleigh was slain in Guiana. Could even Macaulay have sneered at our interest in such objects? 'They continue the presence of the dead,' and in a charming, nameless miniature of the last century, I feel that Fielding's Amelia still radiates grace and kindness. Let us hope the story is untrue, that Charles II. gave his father's miniatures to his ladies, and stopped the pension of the painter's widow, Mrs. Oliver, when she murmured thereat. More probably the pension stopped in the nature of things. A miniature of James VI., in a contemporary diamond setting, sold for 2,835*l.*, at the Hamilton sale.

* * *

Now compare the Waddlepoodle prices, at the sale of Horace's collection, in 1842. Mr. Holford got the Digby for 178*l.* 10*s.*; in fact, he bought a good deal. I know not if all the pieces are at Dorchester House. Petitot's Duchesse de Montbazon fetched 31*l.* 10*s.* The Fairfax enamelled watch, presented by the Parliament, went for twenty guineas! Mr. Dilke got an Oliver for 6*l.* 6*s.*, and Lord Derby got his heroic ancestress for only ten guineas. Pope went for 4*l.* 4*s.*, and Charles II. for little more. But Miss Burdett-Coutts had to 'sport' 241*l.* 10*s.* for a Digby miniature. Lady Mary Coke, that amusing eccentric, modelled in wax, sold for 3*l.* 15*s.*, and a Vandyck, of Vandyck, for 4*l.* 4*s.* Hoskins's Carr, the minion of James VI., was cheap at fourteen guineas, and the Queen of Hearts, by Oliver, at 13*l.* 13*s.* Eight guineas secured Arabella Stuart, by Hilliard. Horace himself, by Zincke, fetched 58*l.* 16*s.* Horace's pet, Cowley, by Zincke, the very apple of his eye, was bought for 63*l.* by Mr. Holford, 'the eyes swim-

¹ Sampson Low & Co.

ming with youth and tenderness.' Miss Burdett-Coutts paid 13*l.* 5*s.* for Henrietta of Orleans, by Petitot, but that great artist's Louis XIV. went for 14*l.* 14*s.*, and his La Vallière for 31*l.* 10*s.* Lucy Waters' Mother of Monmouth was rated at a poor eight guineas, and a fine Prince Charlie at 5*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* And beautiful Molly Lepel was valued at half a sovereign, while Cooper's miniature of himself fell short of a pound by a shilling. This is the most cruel blow of all.

* * *

In a midland town, lately, I 'picked up' a miniature of Prince Charles, aged about twenty-eight, in oil, on copper. He wears the Garter and Thistle, over a red uniform coat. I have another of the Prince, as a boy of fourteen, in enamel, given by him to John Murray of Broughton, in which he wears the same costume. How altered is the face from pretty boyish petulance to a hard defiant recklessness of air! On the back of the leather case of the miniature, in oil, is written: '—— (a word erased), done by Mr. Bone, from the miniature for which he sat before he left Clifton.' Perhaps the case is that of another piece, but Bone was at Bristol (Mr. Foster says) in 1778. He may then have executed this copy from a miniature done at Clifton; but when was the Prince at Clifton? We can only say that we do not know where he was *not*, in England, in 1750–1766. Of course he had no time to give sittings at Clifton Moor, when repulsing Cumberland's advanced guards, in 1746.

* * *

Does any one know the history of the portrait of Charles I. at his trial, now in All Souls College? The King wears his hat, he is in mourning, he has a letter in one hand, his cane in the other. He regards his accusers with melancholy disdain. I fell in love with the portrait at All Souls, and lately 'picked up' a contemporary replica, at no modern price. The portrait has been engraved in old times and must have a history. Of course it cannot have been painted in court, during the so-called Trial of the King, but it may be from a sketch. The likeness is very interesting, and more sympathetic than most portraits of Charles. Any information about the picture and the artist would be gratefully received.

* * *

On the perils of miniatures Mr. Foster writes feelingly. It is a common error to leave them exposed to the sunlight, which

soon destroys the carnations and leaves a melancholy pallid ghost of a likeness. It is easy to hang a dark green veil over miniatures which are arranged in frames on the wall. Mr. Foster offers a probable suggestion as to the cause of mould in miniatures on ivory. The ivory is often the thinnest possible slice, pasted on to paper or cardboard. The paste is likely to become the origin of mould. I lately saw a miniature of Oliver Cromwell, supposed to be contemporary, and attributed to John Hoskins, the master of Cooper, being signed with his initials. But it was on very thin ivory, which was not used till late in the century. Sometimes miniatures were painted on the backs of playing cards, and occasionally a coin was split, and miniatures, as of Charles II. and the Duke of York in the Propert collection, were painted on the polished interiors. What seemed to be a dollar thus contained two miniatures. It is hardly necessary to warn the youngest collector against forgeries, and dealers who call every enamel a Petitot or a Zincke. Forgeries of Cosways are numberless, but easily detected by their badness. Any one who owns miniatures ought to affix the names of the persons, if known; known names add greatly to the value.

* * *

Photography, and the early Victorian age, killed the art of miniature. Efforts are being made to revive it; not with much success, one fears, though a few good examples are exhibited at the Royal Academy and elsewhere. They are feeble, pretty, and laxly handled, as a rule. One cannot expect a good school of miniature apart from a good school of portrait painting. The age of Kneller was not a good age of miniature, in England. The beauties of to-day are commemorated in fading photographs, terribly touched up, while their great-grandmothers live in miniature and mezzotint. Mr. Foster, by the way, tells the story of Strange, the Jacobite miniaturist and engraver, hiding under a strange young lady's ample hoop, after Culloden, and later marrying her. But, in fact, Strange was betrothed, I believe, before 1745, and only took up arms to please the political fair one. Mr. Blaikie, in Edinburgh, showed me lately a contemporary manuscript list of the Whig and Jacobite young ladies of the period, with brief remarks on their characters and charms. But the list stopped at the letter C, and did not include the future Lady Strange. Her husband designed the plates for the paper currency, notes from a penny to sixpence, with which it was intended to pay the High-

land army. The notes probably never came into circulation, and were a most unsatisfactory substitute for the coppers of King George. One ought not to wish the number of collectors to increase, for that would only raise prices, and already they are far too high for the amateur. But a revival of interest in the art among the general public, which cannot compete with rich enthusiasts, might possibly cause a revival of the art itself, and provide a little opening for the too numerous pupils of the schools. At present they swamp the market in 'black and white'; a few of them might try their chances in the more arduous but more pleasing field of miniature. Their first duty is not to copy photographs—a common method.

* * *

In Literature, America is, indeed, about to 'make culture hum.' Professor Peck is translating Petronius *Arbiter*! As the *Critic* eloquently remarks, Petronius was the 'Arbiter Elignantiarum' of Nero's reign, and his morals may be conjectured at. Mr. Peck calls Petronius's book 'the one surviving specimen of the realistic novel in antiquity.' If so, antiquity knew what to discard; but is the work 'realistic'? Surely it is rather 'picaresque,' and *The Golden Ass*, if realism there be, is often as realistic as Petronius. I admit that I never could get through Petronius, who seems dreary enough, when he is not disgusting. That eminent Covenanter, the Rev. Robert Blair, of St. Andrews, confesses that he began Petronius, but found him too wicked for prolonged study. Mr. Peck does not mean to publish the whole book, but I know not whether he Bowdlerises or takes the opposite course. If so, the moral sense of the citizens will be excited once more; whereas, if he Bowdlerises, Petronius will prove the reverse of gay. In the same *Critic* (April 2) I read that 'President McKinley refusing to be jingoed into war by yellow journals and yellow Congressmen' (why yellow: what have Mongolians to do here?) 'is an inspiring object of contemplation.' But did Mr. McKinley refuse to be 'jingoed'? Elsewhere in the same journal, 'Lounger' takes me seriously when I call Hawthorne a writer 'of considerable merit,' whose first editions are strangely cheap, as compared with those of Mr. Kipling. The figure of irony is rarely understood. Naturally I regard Hawthorne as a genius and a classic, and I would prefer first editions of his works even to those of Mr. Kipling. The same critic wonders why somebody should expect much attention for a novel by Mr. Watts Dunton 'published

twenty years ago.' But it was not *published* twenty years ago, as 'Lounger's' authority says it was *written* twenty years ago, and it has been lying in reserve longer than *Waverley*. How strange the old emotions and phrases must look, in an author's eyes, after a silence of twenty years! Finally, a writer in this excellent journal invites me to 'come and see' America. Alas, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Like this hospitable author, I make a real distinction between visitors who come to make money by talking, 'and visitors who come for human pleasure.' I could not pretend to regard my 'talk' as an equivalent for dollars, and the American public might take the same view, above all if, as is too probable, they could not hear the talk, the talker being 'roopy,' as Steerforth said about David Copperfield.

* * *

I have to acknowledge thirteen volumes of poetry and one anonymous letter, type-written, from an angry poet. There is no harm in writing poetry, no harm in publishing it, no grave moral wrong even in sending it to the Sign of the Ship; but it is never moral to write anonymous letters. From Mr. Crandall's *Chords of Life* (modestly 'printed for the Author, Springdale, Conn.') I select a poem of the hour, though there are much better things and more melodious lyrics in the volume:

CUBA LIBRE.

'Cuba Libre!' Hear our daughter o'er the water bravely cry,
While the smoke that never falters from her altars stains the sky;
While the aged, and the children, and the women stricken reel;
'Cuba Libre!' is their answer to the tyrant's fatal steel.

'Cuba Libre!' At her option, by adoption, she is ours;
Bound to us by cords of freedom mightier than earthly powers!
She is hoping, she is groping, through the murk of slavery's air.
Shall we by our deafness drive her to the silence of despair?

'Cuba Libre!' shouts Maceo, riding to a martyr's death;
'Cuba Libre!' smiles Bandera, victor in his latest breath!
'Cuba, wilt thou bow thy head? on royal promises rely?'
'Cuba Libre!' Hear a nation saying she would rather die!

'Cuba Libre!' Hear the mountains echo back the patriot boast;
'Cuba Libre!' sing the waves along two thousand miles of coast!
O'er the water hear our daughter saying: 'Mother, from thy brow,
I have caught the rays of freedom, you may not disown me now.'

Valiant daughter, o'er the water, we have heard thy moving voice,
And the glory of thy story makes a patriot land rejoice !
Five and forty stars of ours salute thee o'er the tumbling sea,
Pledge their forces in their courses 'till thy single star is free !

* * *

Mr. Gathorne Hardy's work on 'The Salmon,' in the 'Feather, Fur, and Fin' series, is very agreeable reading, but solaced me little, last month, beside the Helmsdale. For Mr. Hardy chronicles a couple of blank days, but all my days were blanks !

My days are sunless and my nights are moonless,
Parched the pleasant April herbage, and the lark's loud
outburst tuneless,'

as the poet says. Not that the herbage *was* parched; nay, we had water enough, and wind enough, and salmon in great abundance frisked like lambs. Moreover, the water was in good order. Yet all my days were blank. Thus one was not only *bredouille*, but had not an excuse. Reminded by Mr. Hardy's citations of Scrope's charming old book, I read it again, and learned that the salmon-fisher must be 'sanguine.' He must expect a fish to come in the course of every cast. I would therefore humbly ascribe my lack of success to lack of Imagination. I observed my companions. They fished for at least eight hours daily, which makes four hundred and eighty minutes. Say that four casts go to the minute, that makes nearly two thousand casts per diem for an average of one fish. Now, my fancy delights not in odds of 2,000 to 1 against me. I cannot keep up my interest in each cast. Moreover, it seemed futile to wait for a rising fish and cast over him, which is much the least laborious way of fishing, and the manner to which, with trout, I am accustomed. The dashing, or rather splashing, fish did not rise to fly. Probably the salmon were 'bulging' or 'tailing;' certain it is that, though numerous, they very seldom rose to fly, and, when they did, generally came short, and I hear that the same thing was occurring on the Dee. Whatever the cause of this provoking behaviour, it supplied material for a whole chapter of blank days. So I tried dry fly for the trout, when the March Browns came out; but these uneducated Celtic fish positively preferred the fly wet. Second sight, abundant on the Lochy and the Shin, does not seem to prevail on the Helmsdale; but there is a two-headed black dog which guards a treasure in an unfathomable lochan, that has resisted efforts to

drain it. There are plenty of Piets' Houses and 'Brochs' on the Helmsdale, which is a model of a salmon river, but needs Imagination in the angler, also Patience—monumental Patience—and unwearied muscles, and the best of waterproofs. One fish I lost through Dr. Johnson. I sat down to read *Bozzy*, in the delightful Temple edition, and the gillie took the rod and killed the fish, which had just been waiting for a fly.

* * *

Mr. Slacker, on receiving a proof of his letter, points out that Mr. Freeman and Canon Kingsley revived the old name, *Wessex*, before Mr. Hardy. Kingsley talks of 'us *Wessex* fishers,' in his 'Chalk Stream Studies,' in 1858, and elsewhere. These, at best, are literary and archæological revivals, which Mr. Hardy has made more popular and familiar.

ANDREW LANG.

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